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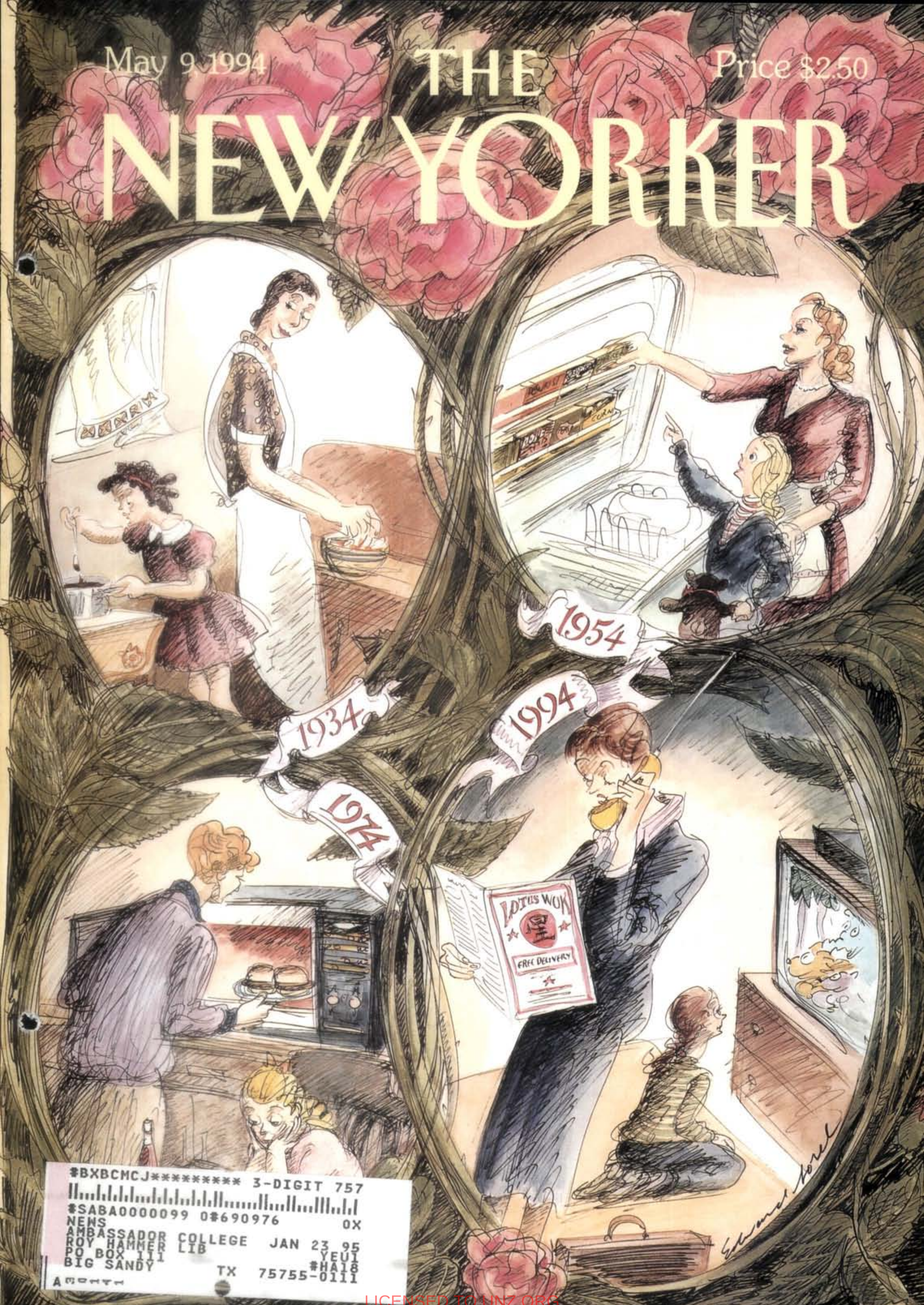
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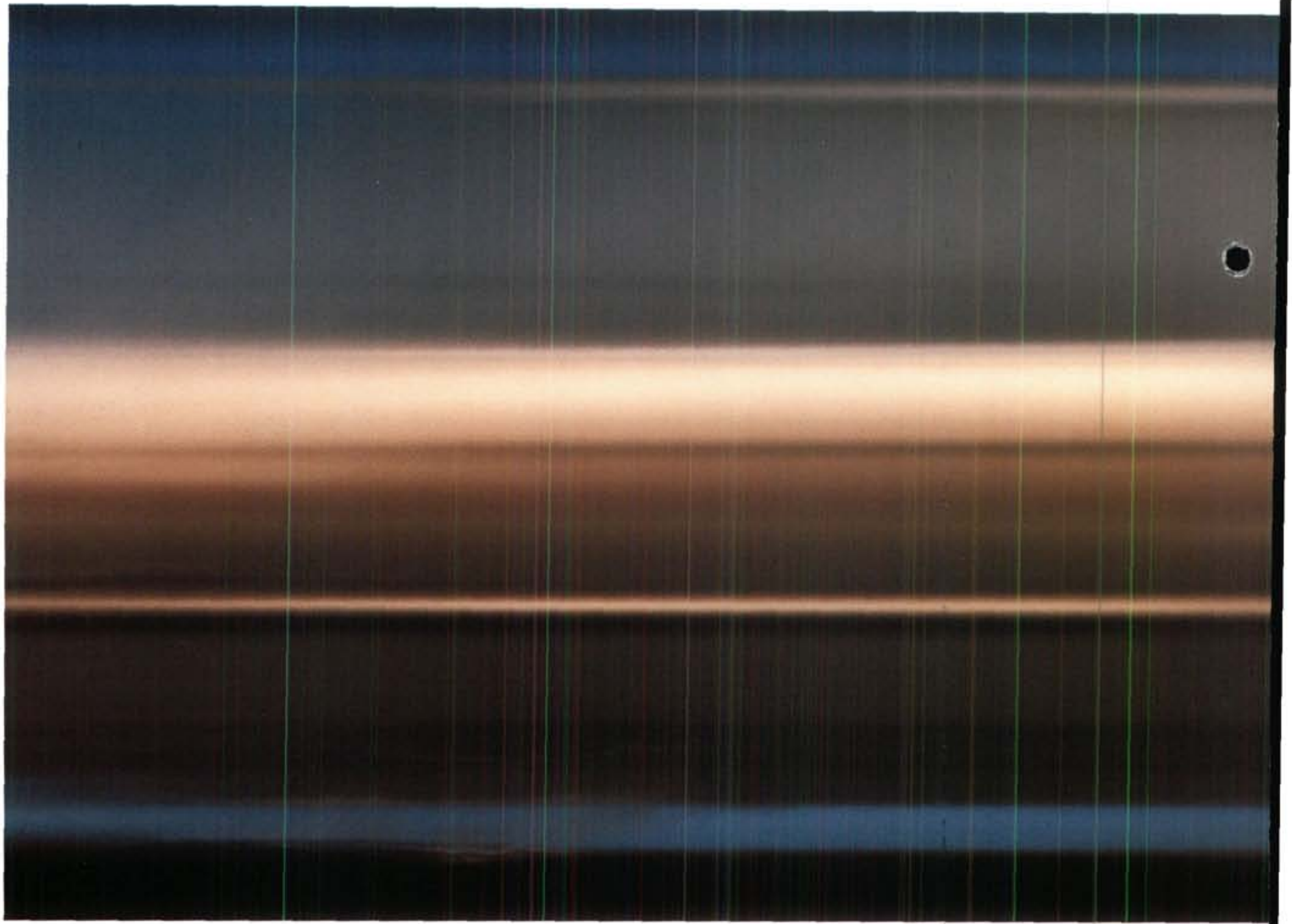

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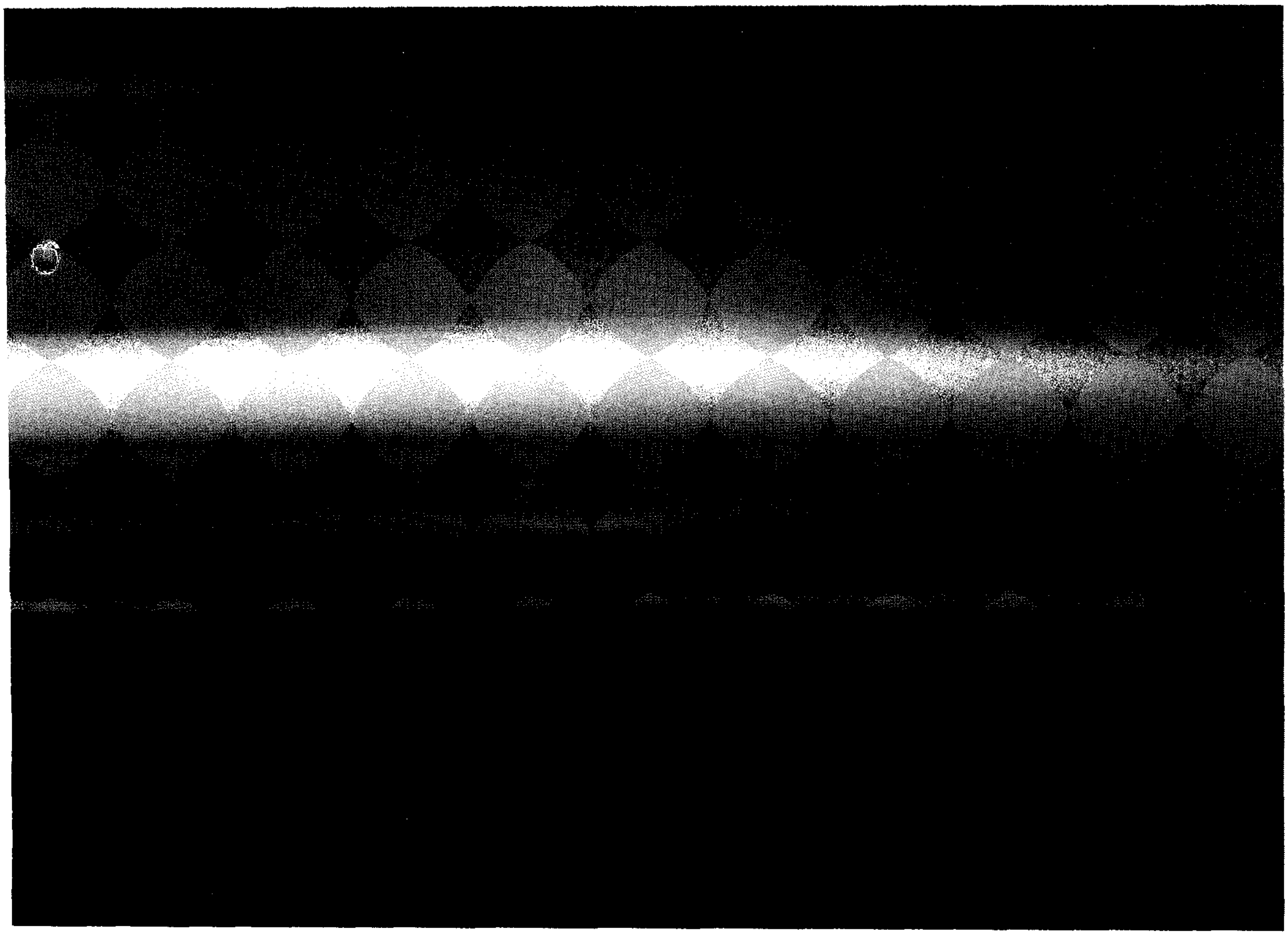

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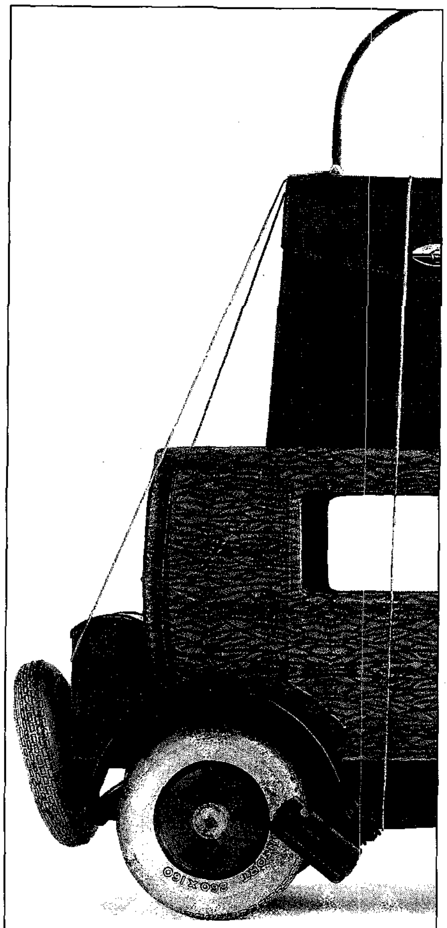

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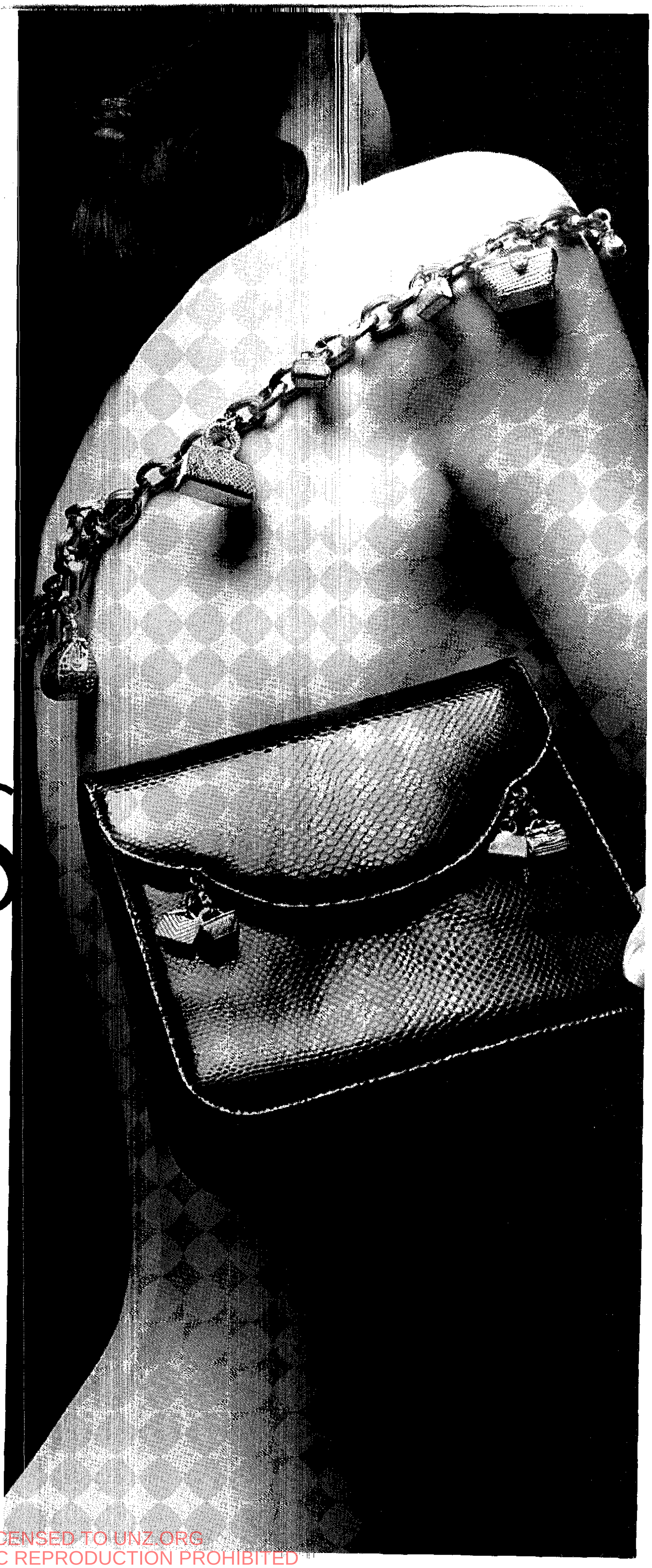

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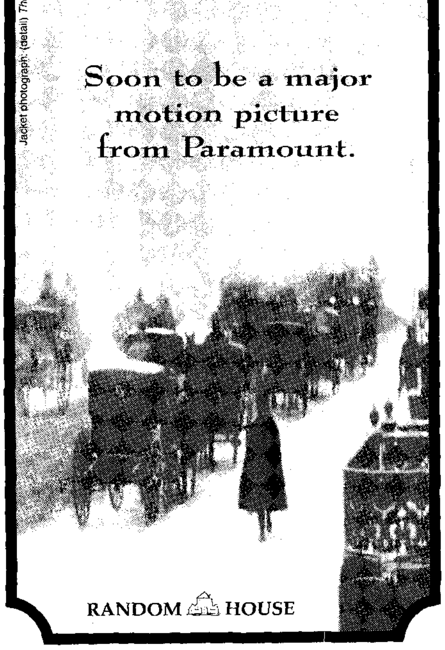

Jacket photograph: (detail) *The Street* by Alfred Stieglitz, from *Camera Work,* July 1903, courtesy of The Library of Congress

RANDOM HOUSE

COMMENT

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

THE South African revolution was always going to be something new under the sun. The great wave of decolonization that swept through Asia and Africa following the Second World War had struck, at the tip of Africa, a formidable anomaly, if not an immovable object: a regional superpower with a modern industrial economy, a ferocious race-based police state, and a large, well-armed, and deeply rooted white minority. The democratic forces within South Africa were obliged to come up with endlessly creative strategies for opposing apartheid, and to muster endless courage to face the campaigns of state terror unleashed against them. As recently as, say, 1989, anyone suggesting that the abolition of white rule was imminent would have been dismissed as unserious; anyone asserting that the abolition would come about politically, as a result of peaceful negotiations between black and white, would have been viewed as contemptibly naïve; and anyone predicting that in five years' time a democratic, one-person-one-vote general election with universal suffrage would sweep the world's most famous political prisoner into the Presidency of South Africa, at the head of a government including the leader of the party that invented apartheid, would have been pitied as suffering from delusions.

Last week, of course, the impossible happened. It took an extraordinary confluence of forces and events, of far-sighted leaders and blind luck, to break the historic deadlock. It took the unforeseen boldness of a white politician, F. W. de Klerk, and the unswerving determination and diplomacy of a black one, the remarkable Nelson Mandela, who in his granitic dignity and shrewd use of his own legend can fairly be compared to George Washington. It took a profound political transformation, as all sides in the freedom struggle had to refashion themselves for life in a new world. It took international economic sanctions. It took the collapse of the Soviet empire and, along with it, the eclipse of the threat of Communism.

The transition to democracy in South

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– David Richards, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"IT'S A WISH COME TRUE FOR BROADWAY AUDIENCES. I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS POSSIBLE TO TOP THE FILM, BUT IT DOES." "A SPECTACULAR STAGE EXTRAVAGANZA"

– Pat Collins, WWOR-TV

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"THE SHOW STOPPING 'BE OUR GUEST' IS PURE BUSBY BERKLEY."

– Joel Siegel, GOOD MORNING AMERICA

– Marc Peyser, NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE

"SOLID ENTERTAINMENT. ALAN MENKEN'S SCORE IS GLORIOUS."

– Michael Sommers, NEWHOUSE NEWS SERVICE

"SUSAN EGAN IS A CHARMING BELLE."

– Jeremy Gerard, VARIETY

"TERRENCE MANN IS EXCELLENT AND VERY MOVING AS THE BEAST. BURKE MOSES IS JUST ABOUT PERFECT AS GASTON. THERE IS MAGIC ON THIS STAGE."

– Linda Winer, N Y NEWSDAY

"EXCEPTIONALLY ENTERTAINING. A MERRY BUOYANT ROMP"

– Robert Osborne, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"THE 'BE OUR GUEST' PRODUCTION NUMBER SPARKLES LIKE JULY 4TH FIREWORKS"

– David Patrick Stearns, USA TODAY

"A SPLENDIFEROUS AND ENDEARING SHOW"

– Frederick Winship, UPI

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"Whenever Mother's Day rolls around, I regret having eaten my young."

Africa has been far bloodier than the gentle revolutions that brought down the Soviet bloc. Still, it has never approached the scale of conflict that would have ensued if the two main contestants for power had decided to fight it out. Instead, politicians of all colors spent weeks kissing babies of all colors. Among the party leaders, the discussion was remarkably civil—so much so that it was considered exceptionally fierce, perhaps even not quite cricket, when Candidate Mandela called President de Klerk "less than candid" in a televised campaign debate.

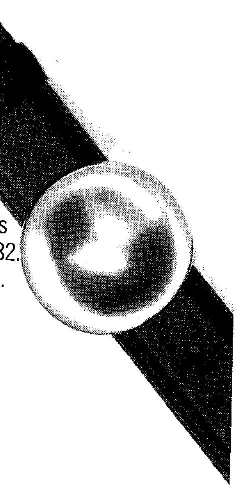
The full results, which will be in sometime this week, are expected to show Mr. Mandela's African National Congress winning in at least six of the country's nine new provinces. One of the many striking aspects of the South African revolution, however, is that the election, for all its millennialist resonances, has not had the quality of a triumphal procession, a liberation cakewalk. The A.N.C. reaped the electoral benefits of centuries of frustrated black political expression, and Mr. de Klerk was not too high-minded to raise the spectre of black political fiascoes elsewhere in Africa, yet there is little real fear that the election will be a prelude to one-party rule. The campaign revealed, rather, a country politically delineated by a great number of factors, including often overlapping considerations of race, class, religion, ethnicity, and political belief. Winning a majority of votes from such an electorate required both coalition politics and a sure instinct for the ideological middle. Though the South African Communist Party remains one of the A.N.C.'s main allies, the A.N.C.'s economic platform came to sound startlingly like that of the 1992 Clinton campaign, complete with continually repeated assurances about keeping taxes down.

This is not to say that South Africa, for all its similarities to our polyglot, resource-blessed, race-obsessed United States, is about to become a liberal democracy overnight. Authoritarianism has been the dominant local political style for centuries, and the values of tolerance and respect for human rights are as fragile as they are new. Unlike the conquest of this country, moreover, the European invasion of South Africa allowed an indigenous majority to survive, and the structures of traditional African authority will present an A.N.C.-led government with policy challenges quite unlike anything that confronts governments in the West. Meanwhile, the extreme and worsening poverty of millions of black South Africans casts a deep shadow across these elections, for democracy seldom thrives where hunger, homelessness, landlessness, and unemployment are rampant, and in the short term the high expectations of the desperate are sure to go unfulfilled.

However, the new government of South Africa will have vast reserves of an invaluable currency, never available to its predecessors: legitimacy. This alone should buy time for its leaders, many of whom will lack any experience in governing, to begin finding their way. The last-second decision by the Zulu nationalist leader Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi to participate in the elections caused an immediate and dramatic drop in the level of political violence and has enormously brightened the outlook for peaceful development, to say nothing of the national mood. Some white diehards boycotted the elections, and a few of them were apparently responsible for a wave of terrorist bombings. But the bombings signally failed to intimidate the voters. The turnout was extraordinary—upward of eighty per cent, according to rough estimates on the last day of balloting.

Such moments of political transcendence are rare, and they are evanescent. They are always followed by some measure of disappointment. And yet South Africans, and all those who supported their long, ragged, slow-motion revolution, have richly earned their elation. Even those of us who merely cheered from the sidelines could not help being moved by the sight of millions of people voting for the first time—people so deeply determined to bring into the world something not seen before. ♦

Mom always told you, "one day you'll thank me for this"



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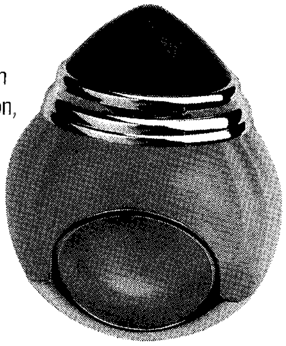
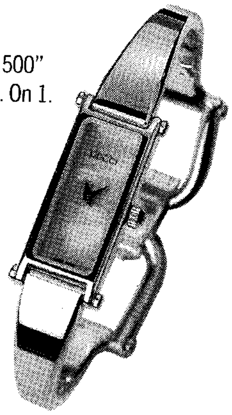


Parfum Boucheron fragrance collection, $55-$200. On 1.

Adrienne Vittadini intarsia sweater, $220, and leggings, $120. Modern Attitudes on 3.



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IN THE MAIL

PACKWOOD'S FOLLIES

As an Oregonian, I've never been a particular supporter of Senator Bob Packwood, but I must commend Peter J. Boyer ("The Ogre's Tale," April 4th) for finally cutting through the hype and blather to address the Senator's problems in a calm and rational manner. The piece reflects my initial reaction to the mess: A man with power who is a social boor has been accused of sexually confronting women, who suddenly have a very belated sense of righteous indignation. A curt remonstrance twenty-five years ago would have saved us all a lot of grief.

PATRICIA BACH
Clatskanie, Ore.

Peter Boyer's blind admiration for Senator Packwood apparently kept him from challenging his question—"If you don't try, how do you know?"—concerning when something's going to be offensive. Even though I've never done such a thing, I know that pulling a woman's ponytail while forcing my tongue into her mouth, or trying to remove the girdle from an unwilling woman, is not appropriate. *I* don't have to be stopped in the act to realize it's wrong. Harassment is wrong today because it has *always* been wrong; it is not that it has *become* wrong. What has changed is that women can now protest with some confidence, even though—as Packwood's defense tactics show—they still risk humiliation and further harassment.

JOHN D. WAGNER
Montpelier, Vt.

Bob Packwood did far more than make clumsy advances and attempt occasional drunken gropings. He used his power and prestige to prevent information pertinent to his ability to discharge the duties of his office from reaching the voters on the eve of an election, and in so doing he managed to win that election. Packwood attempted from the beginning to use his staff to smear and intimidate his accusers; he continues to use his office, his salary, his campaign funds, and a considerable amount of his energies, all of which are supposed to be used in the service of the people of Oregon and the nation, to discredit his accusers and confound any investigation. Many people I have talked to—men and, especially, women—who had in the past voted for Packwood would have voted for his opponent had they known what Packwood was keeping from them. Now does everybody "get it"?

BYARD R. PIDGEON
Corvallis, Ore.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Your April 4th Comment may be right in saying that proportional representation "never caught on here, except in a few small cities and towns," but I can tell you from my family's experience that such a system worked pretty well in Illinois back in the late forties. My d[illegible]d, a white man who ran in opposition to an entrenched Democratic Party machine in St. Clair County, won his first seat in the Illinois General Assembly under such a proportional arrangement by winning much of the black vote, and did a good enough job to win three terms to the State Senate in nonproportional elections. Portions of his old district, including East St. Louis, are now heavily black, and a proportional scheme might be superfluous for increasing black representation. Back in the late forties, however, proportional elections represented the first—and best—hope for an integrated state legislature.

MARK GRAY
Seattle, Wash.

SALMAN RUSHDIE

Julian Barnes, in his article marking the fifth anniversary of the *fatwa* ("Staying Alive," February 21st), quotes Salman Rushdie as saying that I have been "virulently against" him, "vitriolic and personal."

The fact is that I have consistently condemned the *fatwa* against Rushdie, in public statements, in letters, and on television. When I was asked to support a proposal to remove "The Satanic Verses" from open shelves in public libraries in Manchester, I flatly refused, saying that any such action would be a violation of freedom of expression. When the controversy about "The Satanic Verses" began, and there were burnings of the book in England, I wrote an article in the *Independent* in which I upheld the right of Muslims to make peaceable criticisms of the book within the law. In that article, I compared the efforts to ban "The Satanic Verses" with the success of Jews in London in preventing the performance of a play by Jim Allen to which they objected, and with attempts to ban Martin Scorsese's film "The Last Temptation of Christ." I stated that I was opposed to the banning of plays and films and to the burning of books.

While I am not an admirer of Rushdie's literary style, I continue to believe, as I have throughout this wretched controversy, that Rushdie, like any other writer, must have the right to express himself in freedom and tranquillity. That has always been and remains my strongly held view, and I am bewildered that Rushdie should say otherwise.

GERALD KAUFMAN
House of Commons
London

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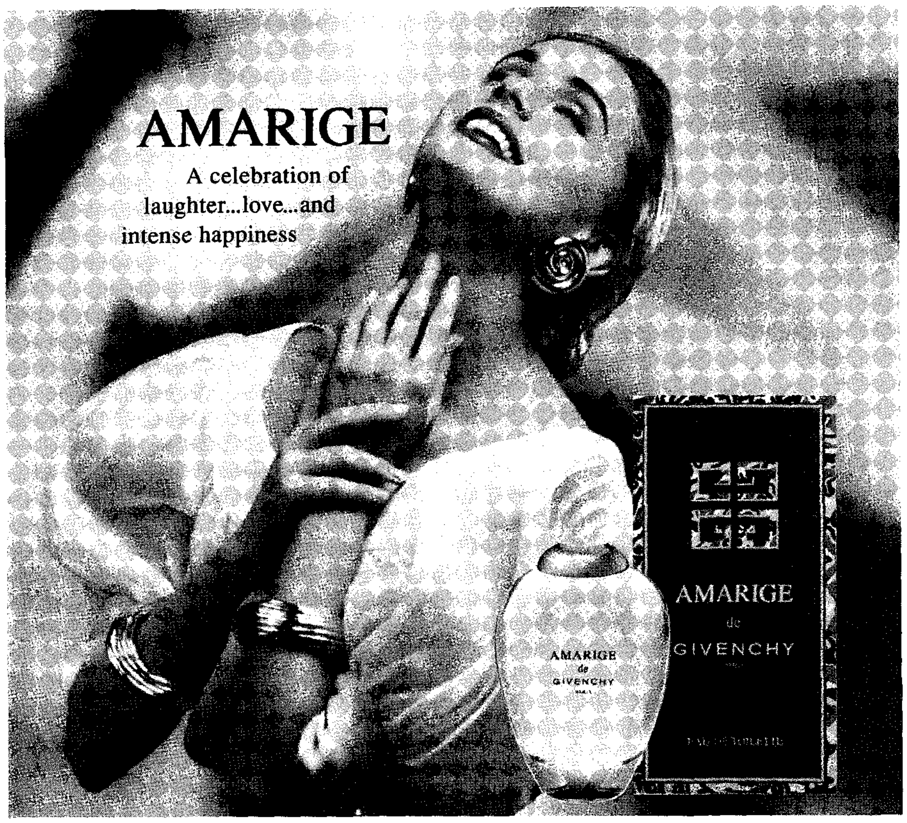

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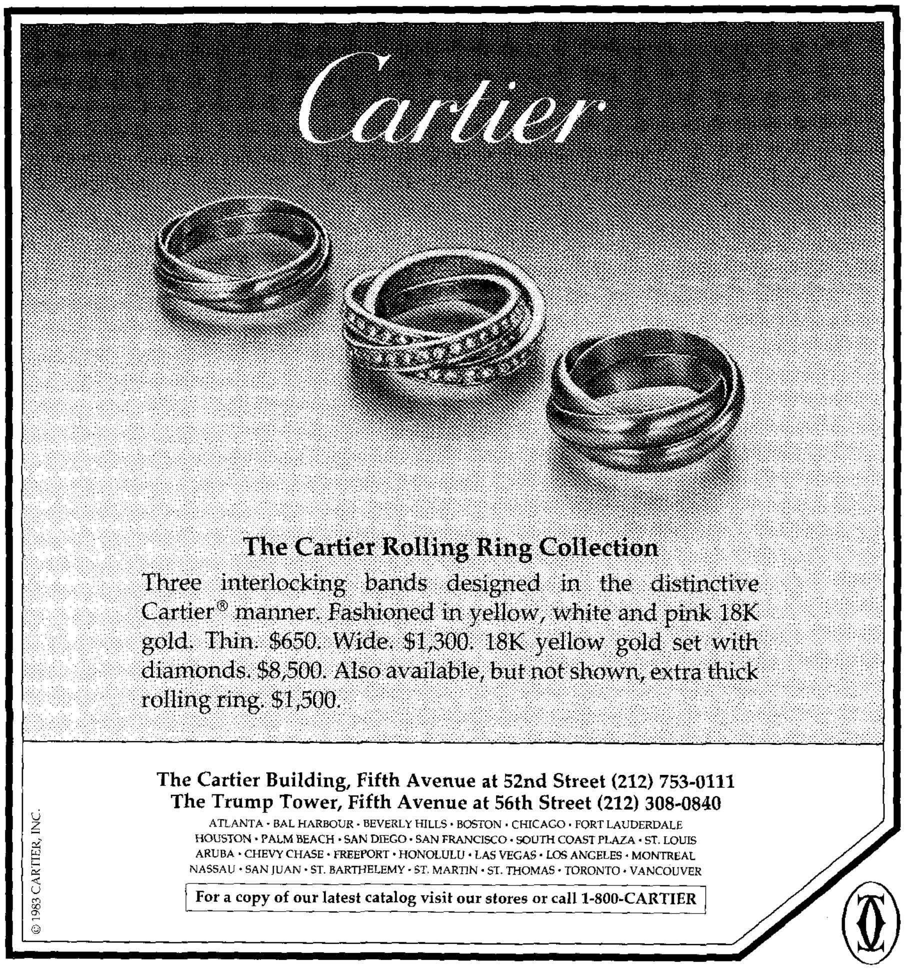
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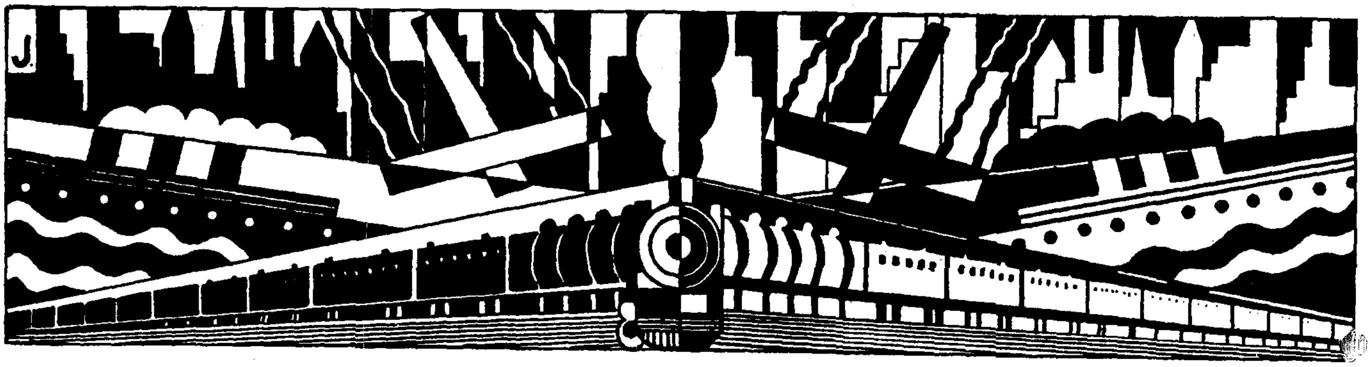


GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
8	9	10	4	5	6	7

THE THEATRE

Boxer Brief

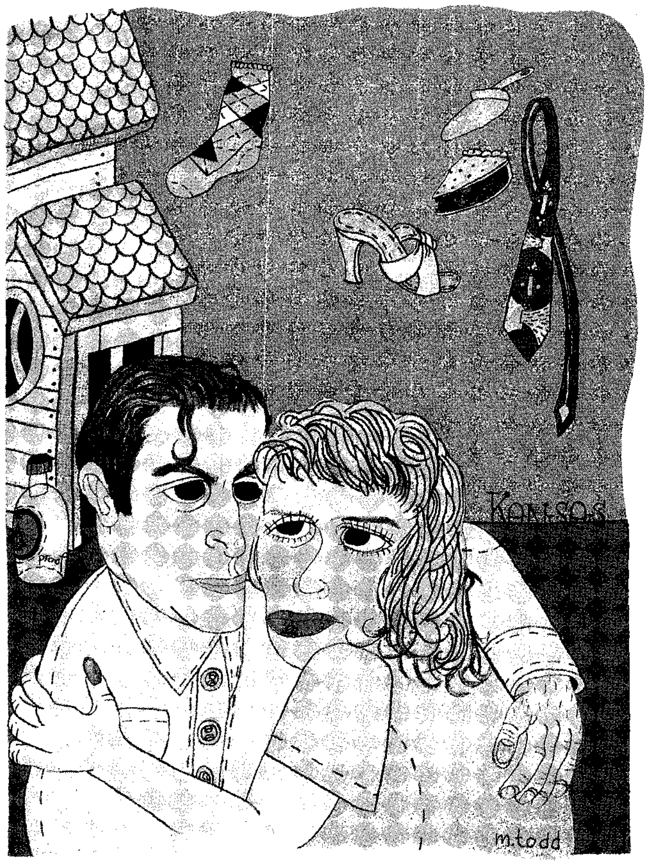
At the age of fourteen, Bryan Goluboff got knocked out in a junior Golden Gloves match, and his life as a writer began. "I was never a very good fighter," the twenty-seven-year-old New York native and first-rate conversational-sparring partner says. "But I had a lot of energy, and quite a temper. I needed another outlet." His literary impulses took him to readings at St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, and he became a veritable groupie of Jim Carroll, to whom he passed along poems. A decade later, Goluboff wrote a movie adaptation of Carroll's hoops-and-heroin classic, "The Basketball Diaries." The long-aborning project began local production two months ago and is scheduled to wrap on May 19, the same day that Goluboff's new play, "In-Betweens," opens at the Westside Theatre. (Previews begin this week.)

A Bronx tale about a hooker, an ex-con, a transvestite, and an old friend who disrupts their lives, "In-Betweens" owes something to the pugilist school of dramaturgy, in which, as Goluboff puts it, "people match wills, and somebody wins." The play began life five years ago, at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and Goluboff says he was initially embarrassed by the subject matter. "This was way before 'The Crying Game,'" he says, "and I'd written a play where a drag queen causes a guy to question his affections. Luckily, I got over the discomfort."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Best Little Whorehouse Goes Public—Dee Hoty and Scott Holmes co-star in this sequel to "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas." Previews through May 9. Opens May 10 at 6:30. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)



Kyle Chandler and Ashley Judd in "Picnic."

Bring in the Morning—A musical by Gary William Friedman and Herb Schapiro that uses poetry, songs, and stories written by teenagers. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Christina Alberta's Father—A new musical by Polly Pen, based on a 1925 novel by H. G. Wells. Opens May 4 at 8. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—The initial offerings in the 1994 one-act-play marathon are "Extensions," by Murray Schisgal; "The Falling Man," by Will Scheffer; "I'm With Ya, Duke," by Herb Gardner; and "Paradise," by Romulus Linney. Series A runs from May 4 through May 15; the marathon continues through June 12. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405.)

Grease!—Rosie O'Donnell is Rizzo, Ricky Paull Goldin is Danny, and Susan Wood is Sandy in Tommy Tune's production of the 1972 musical by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. In previews. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—A musical comedy written by, and starring, Leslie Jordan. In previews. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

In-Betweens—A play by Bryan Goluboff, with Mark Dendy, Carol Kane, Bruno Kirby, and D. B. Sweeney. Previews begin May 5. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Kindertransport—Dana Ivey has the leading role in a play by Diane Samuels. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Lady in the Dark—A concert version of the 1941 Moss Hart/Kurt Weill/Ira Gershwin musical, with Christine Ebersole, Patrick Cassidy, Tony Goldwyn, Frank Converse, Betsy Joslyn, Joe Morton, and Carole Shelley. The brief engagement begins May 4 at 7 and runs through May 7. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

The Medium—Marshall McLuhan's life and writings inspired this multimedia (naturally) piece, conceived and directed by Anne Bogart. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

Milk and Honey—A revised version of Jerry Herman's 1961 musical about an American man and woman who meet and fall in love during a visit to Israel. With Jeanne Lehman and Ron Holgate. Directed by Richard Sabellico. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

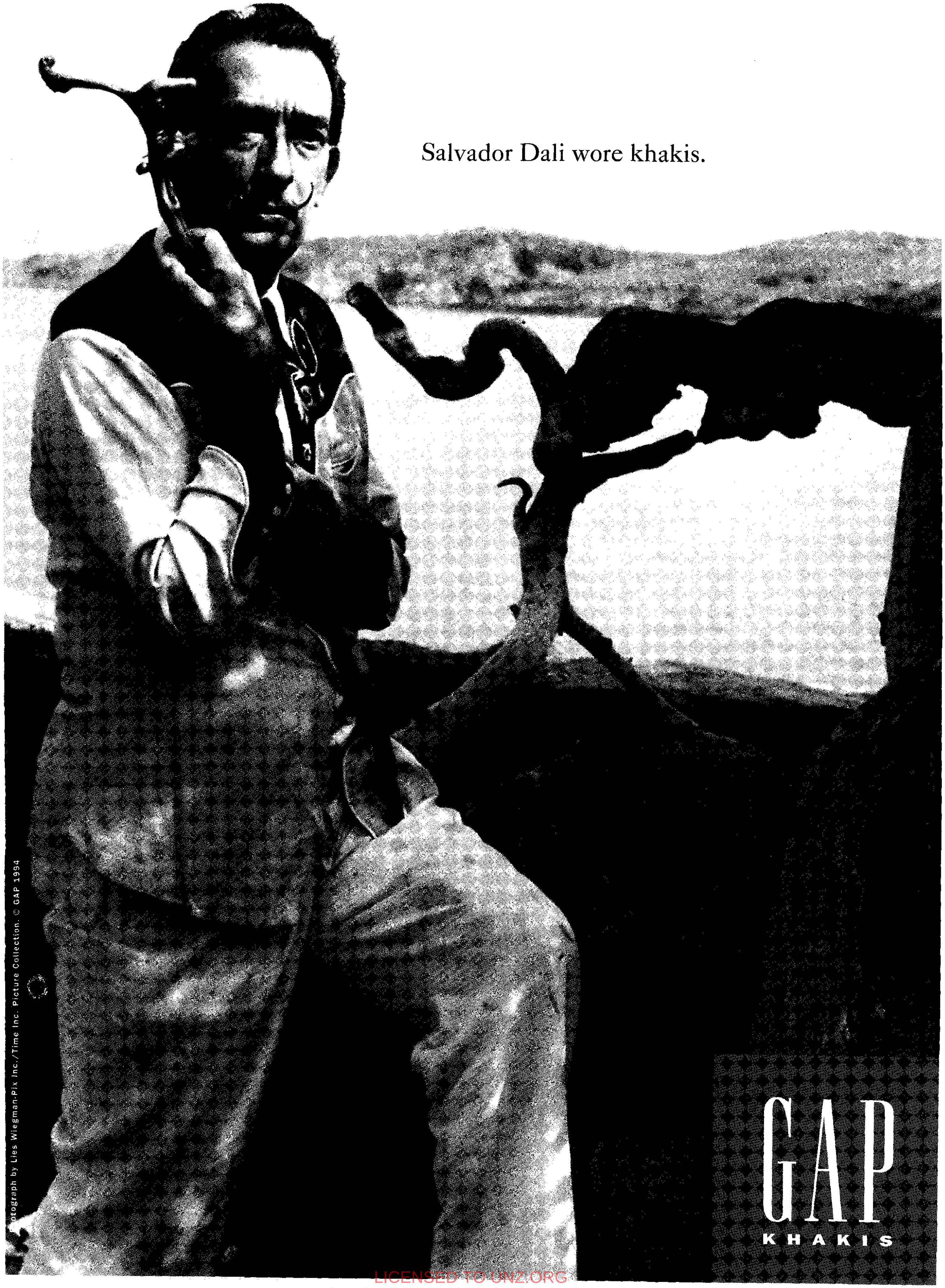
Moe's Lucky Seven—Marlane Meyer's romantic comedy takes place in a bar during a dockworkers' strike. Directed by Roberta Levitow. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim's new musical, with a book by Ja[illegible] Lapine, who also directed. Donna Murphy, Jere Shea, and Marin Mazzie lead the cast. Previews through May 7. Opens May 9 at 6:45. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Sally Marr . . . and her escorts—Joan Rivers stars in a play about the mother of Lenny Bruce. *Written by Ms. Rivers, Erin Sanders*, and Lonny Price. Two previews on May 4. Opens May 5 at 6:30. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

subUrbia—This play by Eric Bogosian concerns some twenty-year-olds hanging out at a 7-Eleven. The cast includes Josh Hamilton, Martha Plimpton, and Steve Zahn. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

MARK TODD


Salvador Dali wore khakis.
GAP
KHAKIS

otograph by Lies Wiegman-Pix Inc./Time Inc. Picture Collection. © GAP 1994

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. The playwright is a master both of wordplay and of the comic possibilities of the human predicament. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors, especially Robert Stanton and Nancy Opel, who possess the energy of Mickey and Judy and the profound goofiness of Sid and Imogene. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Amphigorey: A Musicale—Fifteen Edward Gorey stories set to music. With sets by Mr. Gorey, of course, and a score by Peter Golub. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 777-7474. Closes May 22.)

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, calls itself a musical, but it is really an American cousin of an English genre—the pantomime, which traditionally retells fairy tales with jokes, slapstick, song, and double-entendre. At its best, "Beauty and the Beast" has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number, in which cutlery, kitchen utensils, and flatware camp it up, and the Beast's stunning transformation into the Prince at the finale. But the director, Robert Jess Roth, rarely rises above the pedestrian. With Susan Egan, Terrence Mann, Tom Bosley, Gary Beach, Heath Lamberts, Burke Moses, and Beth Fowler. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

Broken Glass—A new play by Arthur Miller, with Ron Rifkin, Amy Irving, and David Dukes. John Tillinger directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Brothers of the Brush—This first effort by Jimmy Murphy, a Dublin housepainter turned playwright, concerns the mutual suspicion among three housepainters in Dublin and the penny-pinching contractor they work for. The theme is the destructiveness of the every-man-for-himself ethos, but there's plenty of comic byplay to leaven the proceedings. With Ronan Carr, Paul Mc Grane, Paul Ronan, and Mickey Kelly; directed by Nye Heron. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Closes May 15.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting two one-acts by Lanford Wilson, collectively titled "Moonshot and Cosmos." (99 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival, with Victor Garber as the Devil and Bebe Neuwirth as Lola. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). The result is a vehicle that swerves between fifties stodginess and nineties cynicism. But the cast delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Fallen Angel—Corey Glover is among the performers in this play about a rock band, written by Billy Boesky, who also wrote some songs for the show. The story is flimsy, but the songs—in a variety of styles—are enjoyable in a bar-band sort of way. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. With Ann Magnuson, Arabella Field, Reg Rogers, and Grant Shaud. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Fragments—The Signature Theatre Company winds up its Edward Albee season with his most recent full-length play. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes May 8.)

Hide Your Love Away: The Ballad of Brian Epstein—Kevin Scott's play about the Beatles' manager takes place in 1967. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

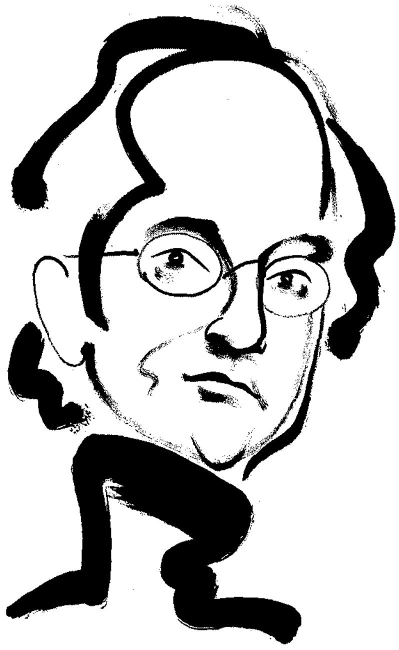
An Inspector Calls—The National Theatre production of J. B. Priestley's mystery thriller, with Rosemary Harris, Kenneth Cranham, and Philip Bosco. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—A considerably pumped-up version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's first musical, with former soap star Michael Damian in the title role. The Bible was never like this. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Medea—Diana Rigg gives a magnetic performance in this production of Euripides' tragedy, an import from London's Almeida Theatre, under the direction of Jonathan Kent. She embodies the concept of deadly wit—in her hands, words are weapons, and she wields them with murderous mastery. Her verbal command is such that at times it obscures the grief that drives her to commit her horrendous acts, but there's a thrilling electrical charge whenever Rigg is onstage, and grief and horror are powerfully conveyed by Peter J. Davison's set, which is so dramatic that it functions as a main character. With Tim Oliver Woodward as Jason, Janet Henfrey, John Turner, and Donald Douglas. (4/25/94) (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)



James Kudelka, choreographer of American Ballet Theatre's "Cruel World."

PAUL HAMLYN

The Mollusc—A turn-of-the-century English social satire by Hubert Henry Davies. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes May 8.)

Mort Sahl's America—One of the innovative funnymen of the fifties and sixties, Mort Sahl is sharply intelligent but too witty to be vulgar, and this is too bad. His gig is more a series of cocktail-party set pieces than a show, but he performs it with enormous laid-back charm. (4/25/94) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Movieland—In Everett Quinton's latest outing, Mr. Q. plays a character called Ruby Stevens (attention, non-campers: that's Barbara Stanwyck's real name), who frenetically acts out parts in half a dozen old movies, including "The Spiral Staircase," "The Ten Commandments," and "Madame X." (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. With Melissa Errico as Eliza Doolittle and Michael Moriarty as Professor Henry Higgins. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Picnic—In William Inge's 1953 play, a man with a past barrels into a small Kansas town on Labor Day, bringing the promise of emotional danger and sex to the women who live there. Scott Ellis's production is set in the thirties, and, though the leads, played by Ashley Judd and Kyle Chandler, are disappointing, most of the actors he's assembled—including Anne Pitoniak, Polly Holliday, Larry Bryggman, Angela Goethals, Tate Donovan, and that paragon of pizzazz Debra Monk—work beautifully together to call up the poignant small-town world that Inge created. William Ivey Long's costumes and Tony Walton's set help evoke the long-ago-and-far-away atmosphere of a Thomas Hart Benton painting. (5/2/94) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs illusions that will amaze even those who wouldn't normally go out of their way to see card tricks. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

The Rise and Fall of Little Voice—Hynden Walch portrays a painfully shy woman with a remarkable singing voice in this play by Jim Cartwright. A Steppenwolf Theatre Company production. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Shaker Heights—A comedy by Quincy Long. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play, which just won Edward Albee a Pulitzer Prize. Myra Carter, Marian Seldes, and Jordan Baker represent three generations of women trying to sort out their pasts. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Triumph of Love—A production of Marivaux's 1732 romantic farce, in a witty new translation by James Magruder. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes May 8.)

Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show, seen recently at the Public Theatre. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Who Will Carry the Word?—Charlotte Delbo, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote this play about women in the death camps. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

LONG RUNS

ANGELS IN AMERICA: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY— PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

PUBLIC THEATRE—Presenting two performance works in rotating repertory: "All for You," by John Fleck (through May 15), and "Airport Music," by Jessica Hagedorn and Han Ong (through May 14). (425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

DELUXE—A new show by the duo Bob & Bob, who promise a combination of performance art, vaudeville, and standup comedy. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202. Thursdays at 10:30, through May 12.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—May 4-6 at 8, May 7 at 2 and 8, and May 8 at 1 and 6: "The Sleeping Beauty." . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: "Ballo della Regina," "Suite of Dances," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Who Cares?" (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 26.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—May 4 at 2: "Symphonie Concertante," "The Red Shoes," and "Gala Performance." . . . ¶ May 4 at 8: "Airs," "Cruel World," and "Etudes." . . . ¶ May 5 at 8: "Symphonie Concertante," "The Red Shoes," and "Sinfonietta." . . . ¶ May 6 at 8 and May 7 at 2 and 8: "Swan Lake." . . . ¶ May 9 at 7: "Theme and Variations," plus excerpts from "Cruel World," "The Nutcracker," "Swan Lake," and "The Sleeping Beauty." . . . ¶ May 10 at 8: "Cruel World," "Sinfonietta," and "Etudes." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 4.)

JENNIFER MULLER/THE WORKS—May 4 and May 7 at 8 and May 8 at 5: "Point of View, a Case of Persimmons and Picasso." . . . ¶ May 5-6 at 8: "Thesaurus," "The Waiting Room," and "Pierrot" (New York première). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY—May 4 and May 6 at 8, May 7 at 2, and May 8 at 7:30: "Foray Forêt" and "Astral Converted (50″)." . . . ¶ May 5 and May 7 at 8 and May 8 at 2: "If you couldn't see me," "Newark," "Another Story as in falling," and "For M.G.: The Movie." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

DAVID ROUSSEVE—Presenting "Pop Dreams," with his eight-member company, Reality, and guest performers. (La Mama Annex, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 5-8 at 7:30.)

URBAN BUSH WOMEN—The opening performance of an engagement by a group of musicians and dancers who explore contemporary and ancestral African themes. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 10 at 8. Through May 15.)

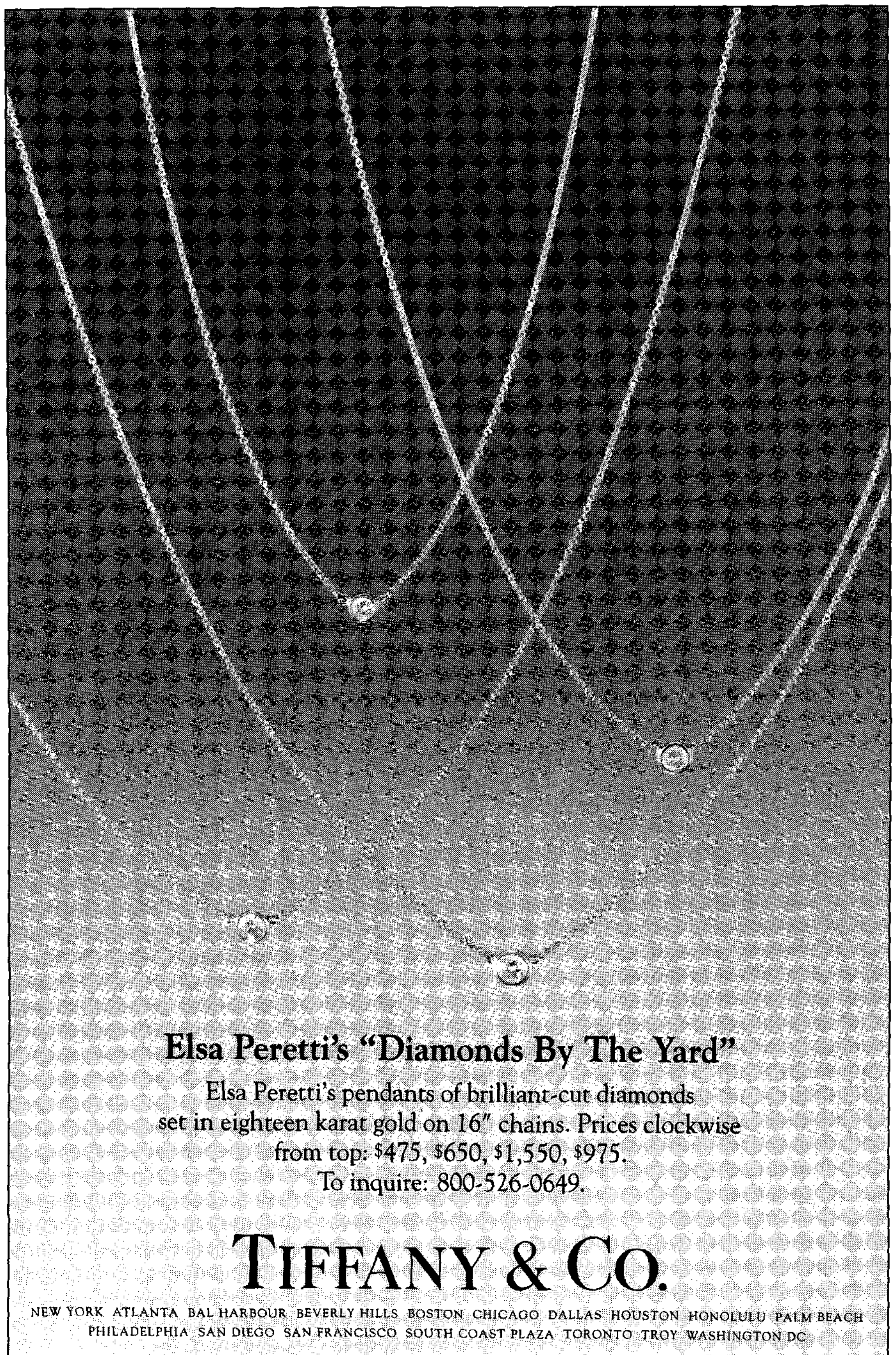
COMPAÑÍA NACIONAL DE DANZA—The opening performance of an engagement by a Spanish modern-ballet troupe in its American début. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. May 10 at 7:30. Through May 15.)

NIGHT LIFE

Club Hopping

IN spring, a night owl's fancy turns to the new joints in town. On a recent Thursday, we made the rounds. Our journey started at Iridium (44 West 63rd Street), the restaurant and jazz club across the street from Lincoln Center. There, after lingering for a while at the handsome upstairs bar and admiring the Dr. Caligari-meets-the-Flintstones-on-LSD décor, we checked out the more intimate, dimly lit Iridium Room downstairs, where patrons can hear live piano and jazz (after ten) as they dine and drink. A posse of thirty- and forty-somethings were digging Thos Shipley and his trio. "The crowd here gets younger later on," a genial maître d' told us. "It's an alternative to the rock or hip-hop scene."

Next, we FedExed ourselves downtown to the Mercury Lounge (217 East Houston Street). The first thing that caught our attention at this East Village hangout was a photo of Lorena Bobbitt taped to the door of the women's room. (To find the men's room, look for Elvis.) In the sparsely appointed and sparsely populated back room (tables, chairs, little red candles), an acoustic country-folk duo called the Dang Brothers played guitar and sang a cheatin', lyin', and cryin' song. The crowd applauded politely, but we were happier with the Hank Williams songs that played between sets.



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Fortified, we headed west to A.K.A. (77 West Houston Street). The atmosphere was like a loft party with guests hipper than any of our own friends. Sipping a drink from a big plastic cup, we sank onto a couch and basked in the warm track lighting and the piped-in hip-hop-jazz instrumentals, but we had a schedule to keep, so we ducked out before the Israeli band Esta took the stage. The Louisiana Community Bar & Grill (622 Broadway) was next. Peanut shells littered the floor and men in suits drank Rolling Rocks and ogled singer Pat Cisarano, who was fronting a decent blues-rock band. Then it was time to go home, where we were able to catch part of "Later with Greg Kinnear," always a reliable way to float into the arms of Morpheus.

CONCERTS

Highlights in Jazz: Salute to Clark Terry—The playfully virtuosic brassman Clark Terry wiggles his way between styles and categories: swing melds into bop, artistry and entertainment intertwine. On hand to celebrate this national treasure will be saxophonist David (Fathead) Newman and trumpeters Lew Soloff and Jon Faddis. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. May 5 at 8.)

Paul Weller—Though only in his mid-thirties, Weller has been a fixture on the modern rock scene for some twenty years. As a young teen-ager, he formed and led the seminal punk-pop band the Jam; later he tried his hand at funkier, more sophisticated fare with Style Council. The singer's eponymous solo-début album, released in 1992, paid homage to the sweet seventies soul music that most of his punk peers either dissed or ignored. His new LP, the just-released "Wild Wood," is not as rhapsodically nostalgic, but it's still a lot groovier than any of his Jam-era fans would have had reason to expect. The earthy folk-pop band Sun 60 opens for Weller. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 6 at 9.)

Celtic Fiddles—Celtic music is more likely to bring to mind a pint of Guinness in the back room than a dry concert hall, but that's what the duelling fiddlers Kevin Burke, Johnny Cunningham, and Christian Lemaître will be playing in. Each will perform a set, and then they'll do some numbers together, for the first time in a year and a half. Cunningham's a showman and Lemaître's a bit serious. The whole evening should come together when Burke takes out his bow. He plays the fiddle so smoothly and with so little showmanship that even a big, formal concert hall becomes intimate. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 7 at 8.)

Slide Hampton and the JazzMasters—Hampton, the superb trombonist and arranger, leads a big band through his beautifully crafted retoolings of works associated with his old mentor Dizzy Gillespie. Two other esteemed Gillespie-ites, trumpeter Jon Faddis and saxophonist Jimmy Heath, will be on hand to assist Hampton in honoring the bop giant. (Colden Center for the Performing Arts, Queens College. 1-718 793-8080. May 7 at 8.)

Nana Vasconcelos and Antonio Zepeda—In a "New Sounds Live" concert. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 5 at 8.)

Doo-Wop Concert—The Channels, the Harptones, the Tokens, the Del Vikings, and all kinds of others. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. May 6 at 8.)

Mother's Day Caribbean All-Stars Festival—The Mighty Sparrow, Lord Kitchener, King David Rudder, et al. (Paramount. May 7 at 8 and May 8 at 4.)

Jerry Butler—With the Impressions and Bloodstone. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. May 8 at 5 and 9.)

"Lyrics & Lyricists"—The series pays tribute to Sammy Fain ("When I Take My Sugar to Tea," "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing"). Performers include Rex Reed (narrator), singer KT Sullivan, and pianist Mike Renzi. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 8 at 2:30 and 8 and May 9 at 2 and 8.)

Mark Helias—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 9 at 8.

Hyman-Davern-DeNicola Trio—Dick Hyman (piano), Kenny Davern (clarinet), and Tony DeNicola (drums) play jazz from the twenties and thirties. (92nd Street Y. May 10 at 8.)

ROCK AND FOLK

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—On May 9, the **brand new heavies** arrive to promote their new album, "Brother Sister." A U.K.-based hip-hop outfit, the Heavies offer a breezy, accessible hybrid of smooth funk and contemporary jazz. What elevates this stuff above your standard VH-1 fodder is the sensuous voice and arresting presence of singer N'Dea Davenport, a lithe dynamo who in concert likes to throw her arms in the air and sway like a palm tree. For concert information, call 249-8870.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. On May 4, catch **four bitchin' babes.** That would be singer-songwriters **christine lavin** (the galvanizing babe), **debbie smith, megon mc donogh,** and **sally fingerett.** The **yellowjackets** perform on May 6-7.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, with a young, patchouli-scented crowd. Singer **lori carson** arrives on May 9, with an acoustic band.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. **medicine** and **new creatures** share the bill on May 5.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. On May 7: the "Stanley Cup of hardcore," featuring **carnivore, sheer terror, marauder, 25 ta lif**[illegible] **bulldoze, victims of society,** and **social disorder.** Enter at your own risk.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Blues giant **taj mahal** drops in on May 4. **shonen knife** is here on May 7, with the Dentists. On May 10, the **rollins band** and **therapy?** begin a two-night stint. Formerly the frontman for Black Flag, Rollins has transcended his hardcore roots to become a sort of Generation X Renaissance man: he sings (sort of), he raps (ditto), he does standup comedy and spoken-word performances, he even writes books. The Rollins Band's latest is called "Weight," as in the emotional kind that Rollins continues to strive for with his earnestly confrontational lyrics. Straight outta Belfast, Therapy? infuses its lean, mean rock with funky rhythms, canny samples, and aggressive lyrics. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

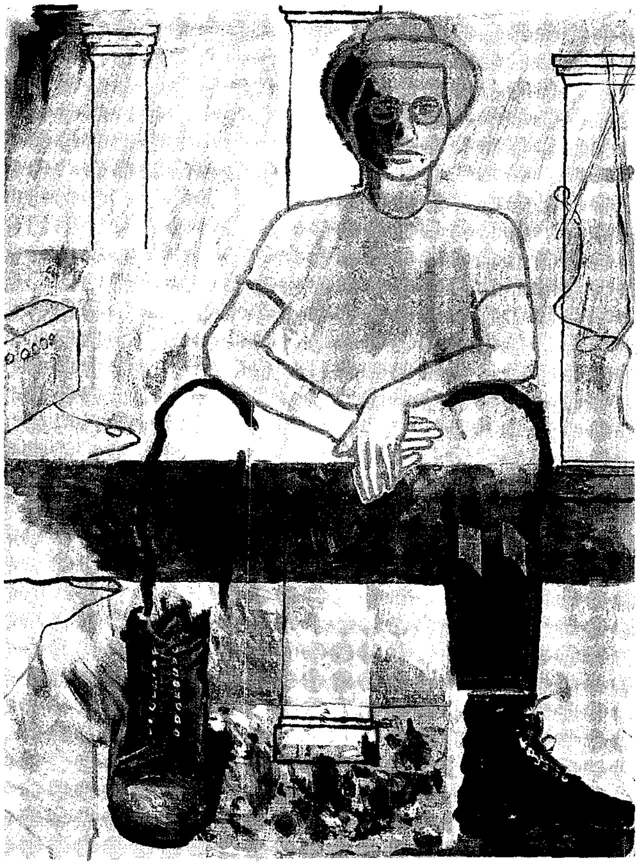
Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A Hoboken landmark. **medicine** swings over from CB's on May 7, with guests the Hair & Skin Trading Co.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—**black 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights. When there's no live music, the jukebox blasts everything from the Chieftains to Greg Trooper to Paddy Reilly, the Irish folksinger who owns the place.

Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—**candlebox** arrives on May 6. This fledgling band's output has been described alternately as metal and grunge, but bassist Bardi Martin, for one, would prefer not be consigned to either category. Sure, these guys hail from Seattle, sport long hair, and use a lot of guitar distortion, but give them a break. Call their music "soulful hard rock," and check it out.

Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway (966-9520)—A sometime gallery space with an ahead-of-the-curve booking policy. May 9: **shellac,** featuring **steve albini.** Albini is on[illegible]f alternative rock's most coveted record producers—his credits include Nirvana's "In Utero," P J Harvey's "Rid of Me," and the Pixies' "Surfer Rosa"—but his own acerbic vocals and fingernails-on-blackboard guitarwork with Big Black, the profoundly abrasive band, may have been his finest noise to date. Shellac is Albini's new project, a "minimal but sufficient" power trio, with Bob Weston on bass and Todd Trainer on drums. **rodan, brick layer cake,** and **shorty** will also perform.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**jerry jeff walker** appears on May 5, with **bob woodruff.** Best known for



Steve Albini at Thread Waxing Space.

KAREN CALDICOTT

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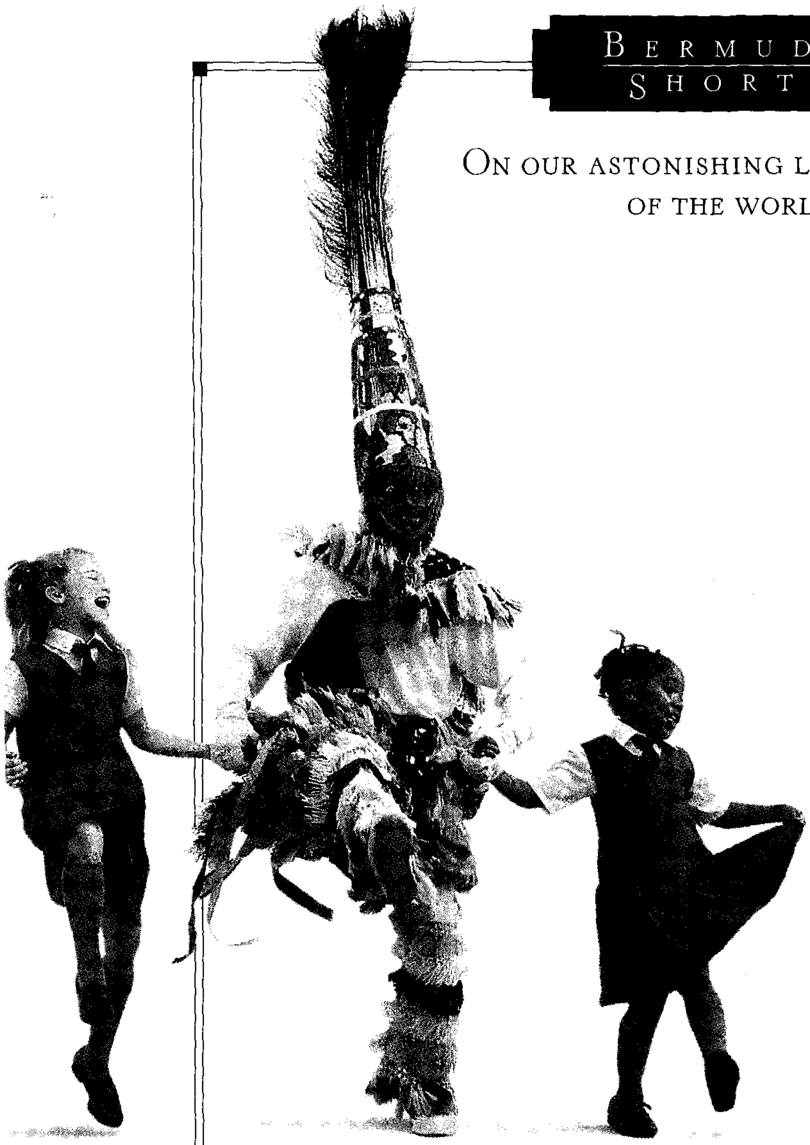

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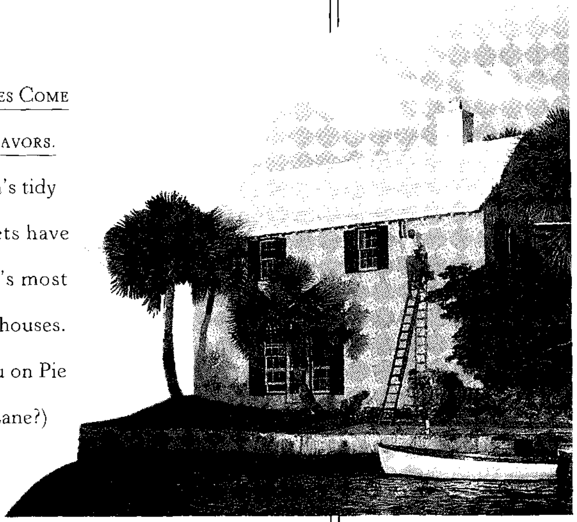

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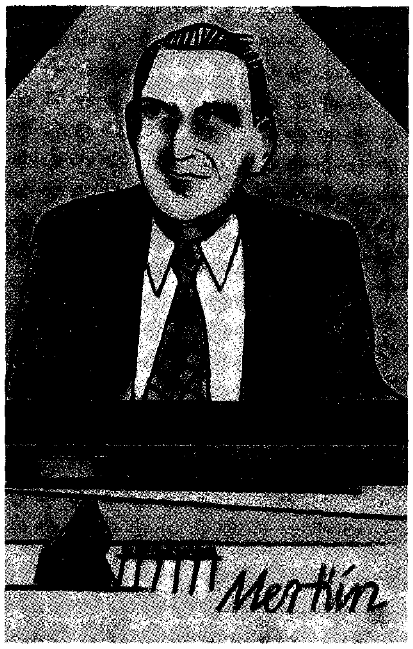
his early-seventies ode to a fellow named Bojangles, Walker has just released a new album, "Viva Luckenbach!" Fashioned as a tribute to the Lone Star State, which has been the singer's adopted home since 1971, "Luckenbach!" features gentle country-folk textures and song titles like "Keep Texas Beautiful." Woodruff, whose work has been compared to the heartland lyricism of Gram Parsons and Bruce Springsteen. On May 7: **E-TRAIN** arrives, featuring **SHEILA E.**

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. On May 6: a triple bill of collegiate pop, with **LISA LOEB & NINE STORIES,** the **NEW ORIGINALS,** and singer-songwriter **RUTH GERSON.**


Dave McKenna at Tavern on the Green.

RICHARD MERKIN

JAZZ AND BLUES

A.K.A, 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, profoundly hip velvet-draped club. May 6: The **GROOVE COLLECTIVE** entertains.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Seventies light-jazz icon **CHUCK MANGIONE** continues through May 8. The **VINNIE CUTRO** quintet drops in on May 9. Starting May 10: the **CHARLES LLOYD** quartet, and **BOBBY WATSON & HORIZON.** Lloyd, every hippie's favorite tenor saxophonist, has unfortunately failed to maintain the crossover audience he cultivated during the sixties. Lloyd is still guilty of some head-in-the-clouds posturing, but when he comes down to earth, he can be entrancing. Watson is the Cannonball Adderley of his day, an exemplary alto-sax player and canny bandleader who revels in the pleasures of connecting with a crowd. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—May 4-7: A trio featuring **GEOFF KEEZER, CARL ALLEN,** and **DAVID EPHROSS.** Beginning May 9: **JOHN HICKS** and **LARRY WILLIS.** Hicks and Willis are a perfect pairing for piano duets; both are florid, bop-based modernists who aren't shy about flaunting their skills. Pianist **RENEE ROSNES** is in on May 8. Rosnes sneaked down from Canada a few years back and has been making big noise ever since. Her playing is clean and vibrant, and she listens closely to her bandmates. Dining.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. May 6-7: Tenor-sax giant **DEWEY REDMAN** appears. Redman is often defined by his work with Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett, but his distinctive sound—rich with unconventional instrumentation, odd modal flourishes, and intricate Latin rhythms—is in a genre all its own.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The great **CAROL SLOANE** entertains through May 8. Sloane is a dramatic performer with a handy contralto, and she's especially adept at scat singing. **CHARLES MACPHERSON** begins an engagement on May 10. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar and lounge, hidden inside the Time Café, with satin couches and mosaic tables—the kind of place one might expect to find Paul Bowles scribbling in a journal. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. On May 6, singer-songwriter **DOROTHY SCOTT** offers a change of pace, bringing her quirky, lyrical folk-blues sensibility to the club. May 7: **VIC CHESTNUTT** appears. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday; every Monday, **GUITARS PLAY MINGUS.** Dining.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—A marble and gilt club, with zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room. **PHILIP HAMILTON** leads a trio on May 6-7. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—May 5-7: The **HOWARD PRICE** quartet. The **KEVIN BLANQ** trio performs on May 9-10.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—**BUSTER WILLIAMS** and **RAY GALLON** play through May 7.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. Saxophonist **GREG OSBY** makes a rare appearance on May 5.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. The rest of the week, **VERNEL BAGNERIS** presents "Hoo-Dude," his tribute to Jelly Roll Morton. Closed Sundays.

METROPOLIS, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—The basement of this swank café is now hosting a series of high-profile gigs. The **MC COY TYNER** trio is in on May 5-7. Had pianist Tyner retired after leaving John Coltrane's group in 1965, he'd still be remembered as one of the most brilliant and individualistic players of an era that prized iconoclasm in its musicians. But Tyner never succumbed to the temptations of an electronic age; on his seventies records, he didn't have to plug in his piano to make it thunder and ring with authority. A certain laxness pervades his eighties work, but his drive returned with the dawn of the nineties.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays, the peripatetic rock and cabaret chanteuse Phoebe Légère entertains between six and eight, followed by the nineteen-forties swing of Stan Rubin's big band. Fridays, Sam Ulano and his Bourbon Street Swingers appear; Saturdays, Bob Cantwell and his Stompers offer Chicago-style Dixieland.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—**HUGH MASEKELA** appears on May 4-5. It has been almost twenty-five years since "Grazing in the Grass" was No. 1 on the R. & B. charts, but the great trumpeter still has the same deliciously delicate touch. May 7: An evening of African *soukous* music with **4 STARS.** Closed Sundays. Dining.

SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Jazz singer **RHONDA ROSS** (Diana's daughter) drops by on May 6, with the David Raleigh band.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. A big band belonging to **GIL GOLDSTEIN** is in action on Mondays. **ARTHUR TAYLOR'S WAILERS** are here through May 8. Taylor, the dean of bebop drumming, has a knack for assembling supertight, hard-blowing ensembles. The Wailers' newly stripped-down edition includes pianist Marc Carey, bassist Billy Johnson, and altoist Abraham Burton (the only holdover). Beginning May 10: **LESTER BOWIE'S BRASS FANTASY.** Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—Jazz pianist **DAVE MC KENNA** performs through May 8. McKenna's left hand is a force of nature, a massive rhythmic generator that could put a bassist out of business.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club. **JUNKO ONISHI** is here through May 8. Armed with a record deal from Blue Note, the Japanese pianist is making her Vanguard début. Onishi knows how to turn on the steam; with Reginald Veal on bass and Herlin Riley on drums, she'll have to. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—On May 6-7: **JACK WALRATH.** A quirky, eclectic trumpeter, Walrath is perhaps best known for his tenure with Charles Mingus, and his writing and arranging skills certainly exhibit the master's enduring influence.

ZANZIBAR, 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—May 6: The **HIRAM BULLOCK** band appears. May 7: A benefit for guitarist **ERIC GALE,** with **CORNELL DUPREE, BOB JAMES, LARRY CORYELL,** and others. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians are first-rate. Through May 7: the **RUFUS REID** trio. Speed-demon jazz bassists are three for a quarter these days, but rare is a bottom man like Rufus Reid, whose awesome technique is never offensive. Drummer Akira Tana and pianist Rob Schneiderman, two Reid regulars, are also on hand.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

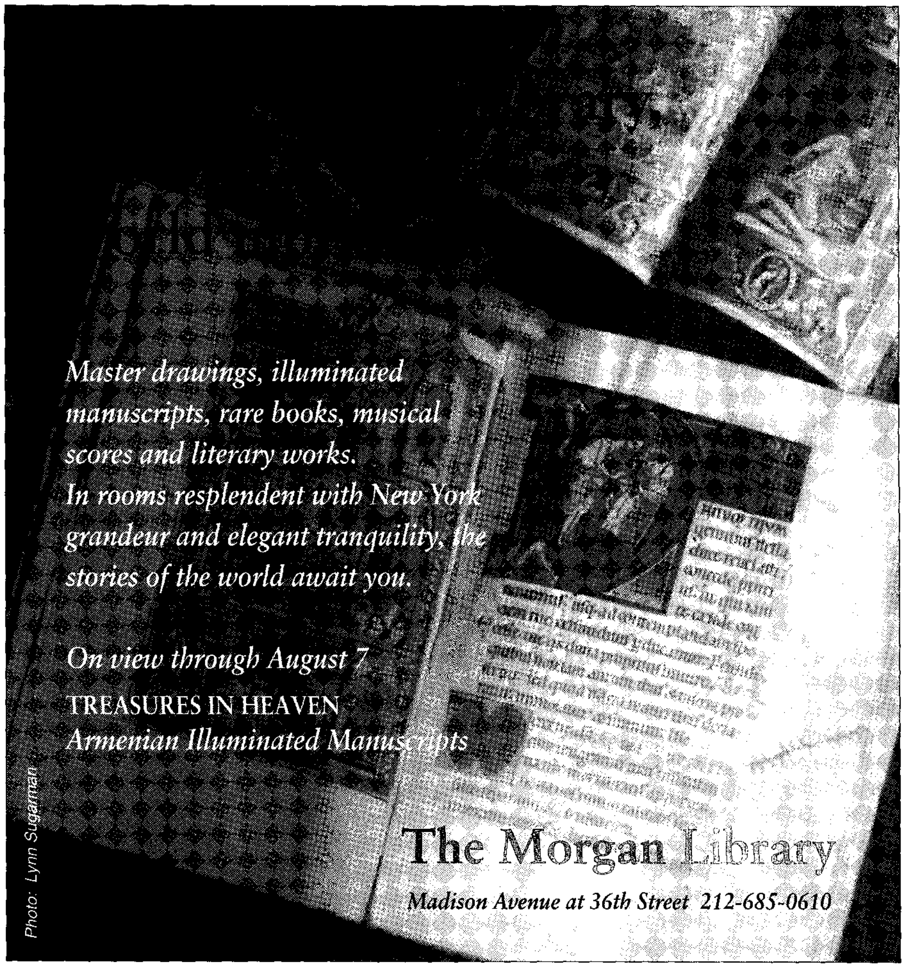
ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Midway through her spring fling in the Oak Room, **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** has embarked on an Irving Berlin tribute, mixing some rarely heard early pieces with such classics as "Cheek to Cheek" and "Say It Isn't So." Packing the evening with such marvellous material is a fail-safe strategy; combined with Marcovicci's smashing tie-and-tails presence, it compensates for any vocal shortcomings. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—Jazz vocalist **ANITA GRAVINE** is in May 3-8. Singer **MICHEL HERMON** and accordionist **GÉRARD BARREAUX** move into the spotlight for two weeks, beginning on May 10, with a Piaf-inspired program. No sets, no props, no frills: just two guys in Euro-black outfits making music like there's no tomorrow. Cabaret legend **BLOSSOM DEARIE** presents an early show (6:30) on Friday and Saturday evenings. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The fabulous **BOBBY SHORT** continues, singing with astonishing precision and energy. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **MARY CLEERE HARAN** continues her four-week run. Unlike many cabaret singers, Haran knows how to use dynamics, and sometimes she pulls her quick, ruffled vibrato up short, like Anita O'Day. In the Irish way, Mary Cleere loves to talk, and some of her between-songs monologues become pocket essays. But she is witty and has an appreciative sotto-voce giggle, and you know that the next number, like love, is just around the corner. Closed Mondays.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red, gold, and green cabaret. **PETER DUCHIN & FRIENDS** are here on May 8. Dining.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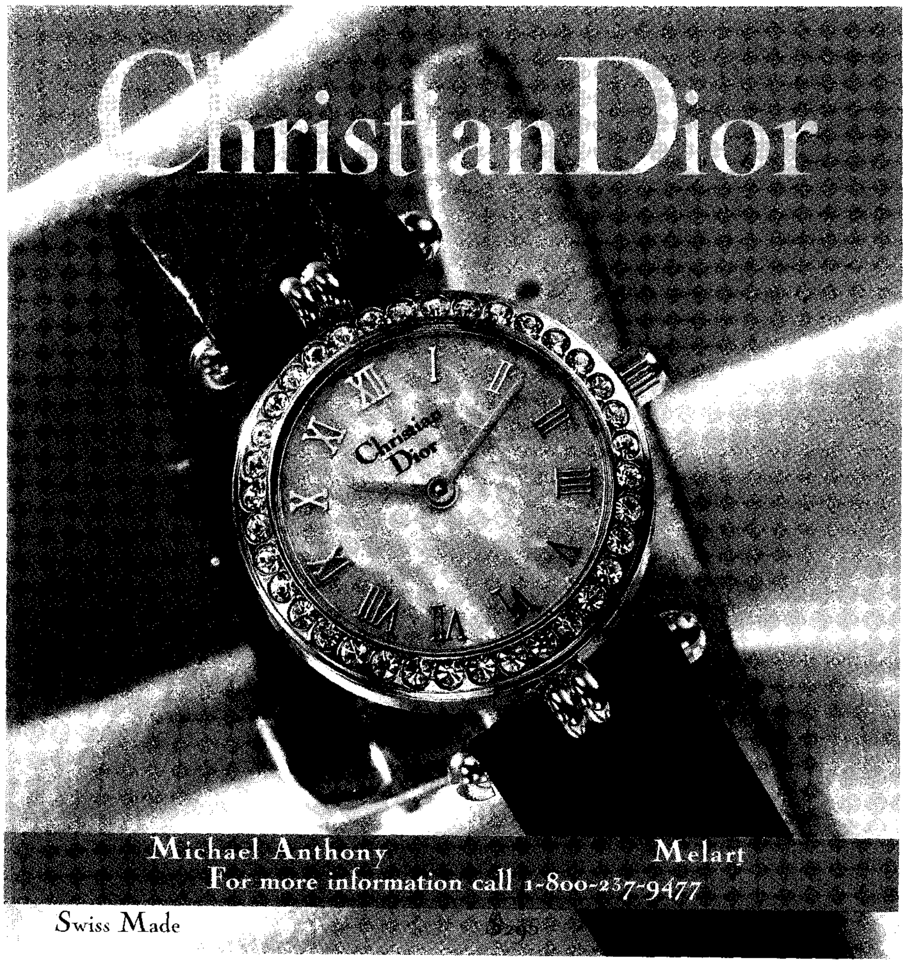
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ART

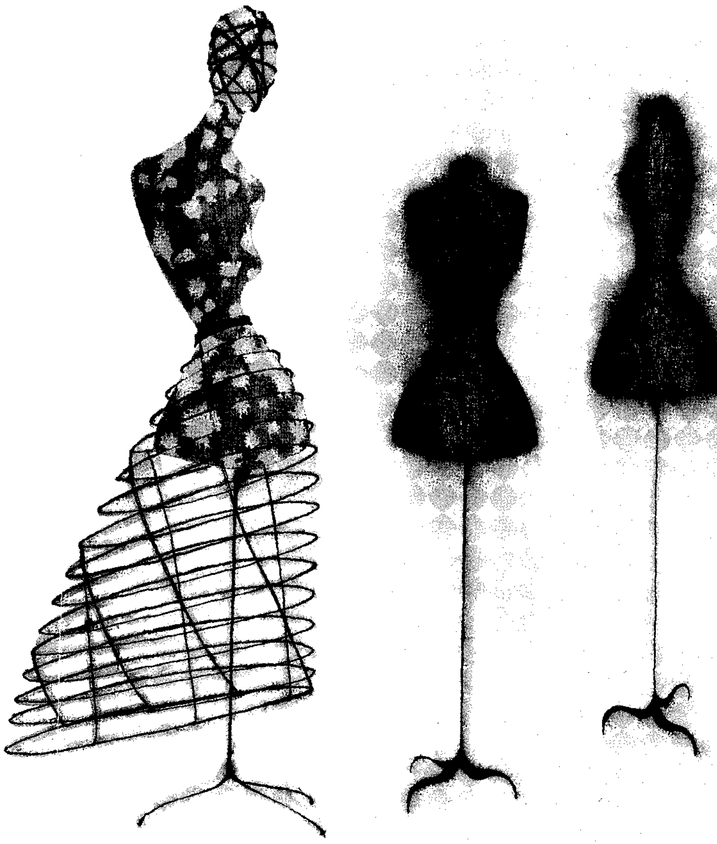
Expanded Inventory

THE newest entries in the Metropolitan Museum's encyclopedic galleries are devoted to South and Southeast Asian art. In the last thirty years, the museum's collection has grown from a self-described "anemic" fifty pieces to more than thirteen hundred. The senior curator, Martin Lerner, who first sketched floor plans for the galleries in 1987, says he's happy to have almost two-thirds of their trove out of storage. Finally, he can see where the gaps are and where there's an embarrassment of riches.

The upshot is that the Met has spread out its collection the way a peddler spreads his wares at Astor Place—everything is on display, it seems, right down to the last unmatched sneaker. Though there are kinks to be worked out, the galleries flow nicely. The interior-design touches, such as the Pandrethan-inspired ceiling or the ethereal Khmer-style courtyard, provide striking settings; it's impossible not to feel the religious significance of the teak Jain temple ceiling. Even a cursory look at the statuary reveals a relaxed jointlessness, very different from the muscular figures of Greece and Rome. In the display cases, you'll see the manuscript pages of "Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Verses," and learn that early Indian earrings are extremely rare, because jewelry was melted down to avoid transmitting the karma of its owner. With these new galleries, the Met not only lets us see an unbeatable selection but provides a context for shows outside its walls, such as the exhibit of Maitreyas, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas currently at the Asia Society.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915." John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt are among those included in the first major exhibition to pair these turn-of-the-century schools of painting. Opens May 10. . . . ¶ Eighteen new permanent galleries devoted to the art of South and Southeast Asia have recently opened. Ancient India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Cambodia, among other nations and cultures, are represented. . . . ¶ "Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges." A disciple of Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, who lived in the mid-fifteenth century, was one of the first Flemish painters to incorporate the Italian convention of one-point perspective into his work. . . . ¶ "Waist Not," a Costume Institute exhibit, proposes that the waist is the defining element of the fashion silhouette, offering examples from the eighteenth century to the present. While it's a thin excuse for a show, there are interesting elements, like a showcase of seventeenth-century busks embellished with risqué carvings and romantic verse: "How I envy you the happiness that is yours, resting softly on her ivory white breast. Let us divide between us, if you please, this glory. You will be there the day and I shall be there the night." A Jane Fonda exercise tape provides the audio. Paris bad boy Jean-Paul Gaultier's clownlike oversized pants offer a contrast to the rest of the cinched-in show. . . . ¶ "The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. (There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum.) (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



"Waist Not" at the Metropolitan Museum.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Projects: Karin Sander." Three large works, including a seventy-by-fifty-foot sculpture made of Astro-Turf. Through June 6. . . . ¶ "Bernard Tschumi: Architecture and Event." Models and drawings of six projects. Part of the museum's Thresholds series. . . . ¶ Selections from the museum's collection of American Surrealist photography, including work by Maya Deren, Clarence John Laughlin, George Platt Lynes, Frederick Sommer, Val Telberg, and Edmund Teske. . . . ¶ The fourth exhibition in the Artist's Choice series features John Baldessari's "e.g. Grass, Water Heater, Mouths, & etc. (for John Graham)," which uses photographic reproductions of details from twenty-nine works from the museum's permanent collection—paintings, photographs, prints, drawings, and film stills. He has strategically cropped, enlarged, and recombined them in an eccentric, sprawling composition, which he says resembles a bizarre animal. Six of the original works are arrayed on facing walls, with the sections that Baldessari has used spotlighted from above; reproductions of the others, with relevant sections whited out, ring the gallery at ankle level. Through May 10. . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect." A retrospective, beginning with material from the eighteen-eighties. (There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Guggenheim Museum.) Through May 10. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Women on the Edge: Twenty Photographers in Europe, 1919-39" provides an antidote to the many historical surveys that have overlooked women who contributed to this fertile, influential period in European photography. The variety of intentions (from advertising to art) and the heterogeneity of styles make for a wide-ranging tour of the era's dynamics, from the work of well-known photographers like Florence Henri and Lucia Moholy to pages from Irene Bayer's personal photo albums. Through June 1. . . . ¶ "Frank Lloyd Wright's Designs for the Guggenheim Museum." (There are concurrent shows of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.) (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Rolywholyover A Circus." John Cage (1912-92) took his title from Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" and used, among other things, a computerized version of the "I Ching" to create a circus. Cage said, "The basic idea is that the exhibition would change so much that if you came back a second time, you wouldn't recognize it." It includes a rotating exhibit of work by fifty artists, including Rauschenberg and Joseph Cornell; *enso* scrolls; an interactive computer installation; an object each from the permanent collections of several New York museums; and a media room with a changing program of recordings, video and slide shows, and live events. For schedule information, call 423-3836. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist. . . . ¶ "Richard Avedon: Evide[illegible] 1944-94." A retrospective that includes the photographer's early unpublished work for *Life*, fashion shots for *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, several signature formal portraits, and a series of pictures done in the East Louisiana State Hospital, in February, 1963. Though the show has a decidedly informal air (there's no glass over the pictures, and several are just tacked to the wall or tacked within aluminum frames), the momentousness of the photographs is underscored by their large scale. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Louise Bourgeois: The Locus of Memory, Works 1982-1993." An expanded version of the

KAREEM ILLYA

sculptor's 1993 Venice Biennale exhibit, with some twenty-five works made from Carrara marble, rubber, wood, bronze, steel, and glass. There are also thirty works on paper. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Uncommon Beauty in Common Objects: The Legacy of African-American Craft Art" reveals African-American craft artists not only as keepers of their culture (sometimes not without political asides) but as prime movers in the field. One of the most commanding, and pointed, pieces is Angela Franklin's "I Never Learned to Tap Dance, My Shoes Go Unworn" (1990). There are also objects of sheer beauty, such as James Watkins' "Painted Desert" stoneware bowl (1986) and Robert Stull's ceramic "Queen Mother" (1978). (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A thirty-eight-inch bronze Buddha from Thailand is the centerpiece of an exhibit of some fifty related sculptures—of Maitreyas, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas—which share certain postures and stylistic conventions. Closer inspection reveals the differences between the Khmer, Mon, and Shrivijayan types. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—Photographs of nineteenth-century China by John Thomson (1837-1921). These beautiful sepia-toned works capture everyday life in China in the eighteen-sixties. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-75." A trip down short-term-memory lane, documenting the rise of industrial designers, who became indispensable to the quenching of America's thirst for new products. The pink Formica kitchen display looks like a perky old magazine advertisement come to life. The docents should look like Stepford wives. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—Irish artist James Coleman's new project, which involves slides and audiotapes, will be shown along with the first installment of a three-part retrospective of his work. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—Sèvres porcelain, Limoges enamel, and paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Whistler, and El Greco are all on view in this former residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History" chiefly uses documentary material—architectural models, designs, photographs, and video—to trace the development of these memorials in Europe, Israel, and the United States. The exhibit confronts us again and again with aesthetic choices—narrative versus abstraction, passionate immediacy versus austere recollection. Ultimately, this show proposes the memorial as a place for remembering rather than as a repository for memories. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts." Selections include a tenth-century Gospel and items dating from the Armenian diaspora of the eighteenth century. Opens May 4. . . . ¶ Drawings by Dürer, Leonardo, Rubens, and Schiele, from the Otto Manley collection. Leonardo's reverse handwriting can be seen in two drawings of machines. Opens May 4. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Western Artists/African Art." African objects are exhibited along with photographs of the works as usually displayed by the Western artists who own them. Opens May 6. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

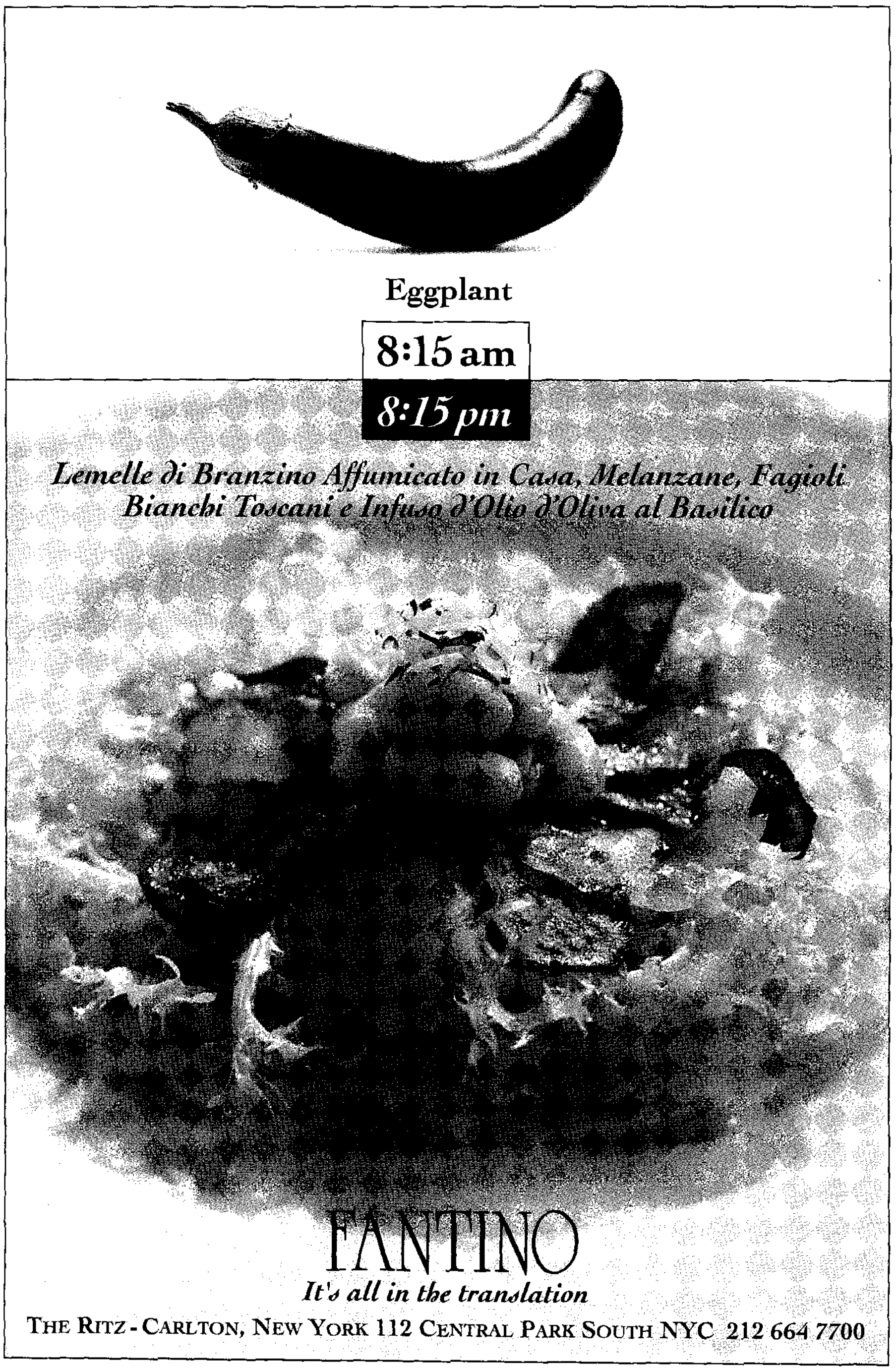
National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Artist's Eye: Wayne Thiebaud." The painter has selected more than fifty paintings from the Academy's collection. Fifteen of Thiebaud's own pictures will also be on exhibit. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Huang Yong Ping: Chinese Hand Laundry and Chen Zhen: Field of Waste." Two installations for which the artists have divided the gallery into both shared space and individual territory, and have positioned their work according to the principles of Chinese chess. Opens May 6. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Compleat Charles Addams." Some hundred and seventy drawings and watercolors by the artist; personal memorabilia, including his drawing table; original illustrations for "The Chas Addams Mother Goose"; and life-size photographs of the movie and television characters, next to enlargements of the cartoon originals. The cartoons—a broad selection—are arranged by theme. One section, "The Creative Process," shows drawings in progress alongside the finished product—a glimpse of the master at work. Through May 7. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"The House I Live In: American Performance in the Era of Blacklisting" documents the effect of blacklisting on the entertainment industry. The exhibit includes such publications as "Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television." (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—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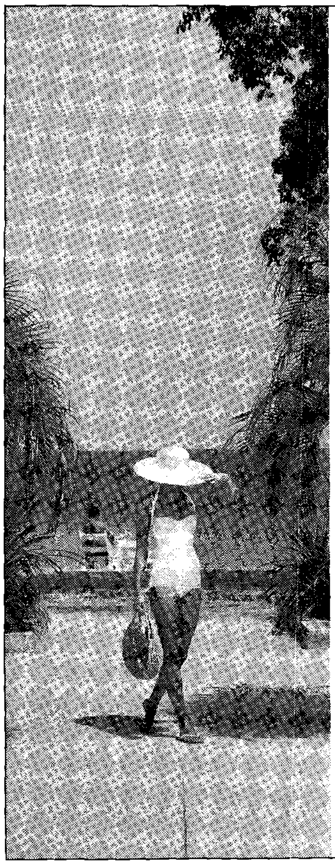

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ART—Cont'd

Works from every period of the Japanese-American sculptor's life (1904-88) are installed in a garden and open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photo-engraving factory. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"Farewell to Bosnia: New Photographs by Gilles Peress." Opens May 8. . . . ¶ The annual exhibit of P.S. 1 studio artists. Opens May 8. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—"South Africa: The Cordoned Heart." Photo-essays on the working and living conditions of black South Africans. . . . ¶ Photographs of Nelson Mandela's June, 1990, visit to New York City. . . . ¶ Photographs of New York City high-school students and their pen pals in Cape Town, South Africa. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Elizabeth Catlett: Works on Paper, 1944-1992." Representational prints. Through May 8. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Woody Gwyn—Three realistic landscape paintings. Opens May 6. Through May 31. (Perlow, 560 Broadway.)

Alan Herman / Keith Long—Constructions of unpeopled interiors. / Wall pieces. Opens May 7. Through May 28. (OK Harris, 383 West Broadway.)

Akira Kurosawa—Drawings by the Japanese filmmaker. Opens May 4. Through July 9. (Ise, 623 Broadway.)

Grace Bakst Wapner—Sculptures of abstract paired figures. Opens May 7. Through June 11. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

•

Christian Philipp Müller—In a clever bit of institutional analysis and subterfuge, this young Swiss artist has doctored some German- and English-language guides to New York and SoHo, dramatically altering the public profile of the gallery in which he shows. For instance, a photo of Müller's dealer, Colin de Land, replaces one of Leo Castelli. Through May 7. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St.)

Judith Streeter—Abstract, richly textured mixed-medium-on-plywood works by an artist who exhaustively reworks the surface of her paintings to achieve a collage effect. Evocative of arid landscapes, illuminated night skies, and striated slate slabs, these pieces, rendered in varying shades of gray, blue, brown, and brick red, reveal geometric forms, crucifixes, and symbols within their organic contexts. Featured in each is a plane, or table, which the artist says represents the family as the foundation of life. Through May 7. (Haller, 560 Broadway.)

Matthew Weinstein—New paintings in acrylic and mixed mediums by a young artist uses unusual formal means to advance an anthropomorphic vision. Weinstein has cut holes in his canvases, pricked them with pins, and bedizened them with magazine cutouts. Scenes of chaos and dismemberment, created from recurrent images of bones and musculature, are surprisingly merry. Through May 14. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Betty Woodman—Recent ceramic work by an artist who crosses the boundary between craft and art. Influenced by Etruscan and Minoan pottery, Woodman plays with the idea of form versus function by celebrating both: what seems to be a purely decorative freestanding facade turns out to be an actual vase (which the gallery has filled with flowers). In her large-scale compositions, wall and floor space are occupied by elements of the vessel deconstructed—a rich-colored glazed curve, a terra-cotta silhouette, abstract shapes merged with containers—evoking not just the beauty and purpose of ceramics but the history of the contemporary vase, the Grecian urn, the Tuscan water pitcher. Through May 21. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Grimanesa Amoros—Paintings of anthropomorphic figures. Through May 30. (Roy, 46 Greene St.)

Dara Birnbaum—"Hostage," a video installation. Through May 27. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Daniel Bruggeman—Landscape paintings constructed as objects. Through May 21. (Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

Robert Gober—Four sculptures, one of which employs the gallery's architecture. Through June 4. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Hans Haacke—A conceptual installation. Through May 21. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Duncan Hannah—Representational cityscapes with figures. Through June 4. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

Mary Heilmann—Mostly geometric abstractions from the seventies. Through May 21. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

Guillermo Kuitca—"The Tablada Suite," a series of ten paintings containing imagery based on architectural plans for hospitals, cemeteries, and prisons. Through June 11. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Liz Larner—Cast-pewter hands suspended from the ceiling. Through June 4. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Margrit Lewczuk—Abstract paintings influenced by Dove and Hartley landscapes. Through May 25. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Lynn McCarty—Abstract oil paintings on Masonite, developed over an extended period. Through May 21. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Kenny Scharf—Idyllic landscapes reflecting the artist's interest in the environment. Through May 27. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

"Pier Show 2"—Work by more than a hundred artists, exhibited in a Civil War-era warehouse. (Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition, 141 Beard St. Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 6, through May 29.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Cheryl Laemmle—Recent autobiographical paintings touching on family relationships. Opens May 4. Through June 3. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Norman Lundin—Still-lifes and studio interiors reflecting the atmosphere of the Northwest. Opens May 4. Through May 27. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

•

Anthony Caro—An exhibition celebrating this British sculptor's seventieth birthday is devoted to works of the past few years. With the triumph of minimalist aesthetics, it is easy to forget that in the early sixties Caro's work was considered the apogee of modernist sculpture. These recent works—in particular, the larger ones, like "The Caliph's Garden" (1989-92) and "Night and Dreams" (1990-91)—show Caro as an artist still in full possession of his own distinctive idiom. The critic Michael Fried, who wrote the catalogue essay for this show, has characterized the style as "abstract syntax"—an alternative to the brute materiality associated with minimalism. Through May 27. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Saint Clair Cemin—New works by this Brazilian-born sculptor. Cemin traffics in elegant eclecticism, traversing many styles. High modernism, decorative flourishes, kitsch, and a bit of Rodin commingle pleasantly enough in these hybrid sculptures. Through May 21. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Pat Adams—Enormous paintings, shaped works on paper, and monotypes, all with geometric elements. Through May 28. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Will Barnet—Five paintings and related works on paper that serve as signposts in the artist's sixty-year career, from "Family and Pink Table (Mary and Sons)" (1948) to "Three Chairs" (1992), both of which portray a mother with her children and a cat. The earlier painting shows Barnet's debt to his European contemporaries, while the later is an example of his confident, precise compositional style. Through May 21. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Terry Berkowitz—A multimedia installation about how rape affects women's lives. Through June 21. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Richard Dadd (1817-86)—Based on loans from public and private collections, this artist's first show in America includes paintings and watercolors of fantasy figures and landscapes, and a series on the passions. Through June 3. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978)—Thirty paintings, plus drawings, by the Surrealist. Through May 28. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

Alberto Giacometti (1901-66)—Sculptures and drawings from the artist's formative years in Paris (1922-30). Through June 11. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

Robert Graham—Eight sculptures of female nudes, cast in bronze or concrete, with a variety of painted and patinated surfaces. Through June 4. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

John Stuart Ingle—Watercolor still-lifes and portraits. Through May 27. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

John Moore—Twenty semi-abstract cityscapes: people in windows, buildings shrouded in darkness, and so on. Through May 21. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

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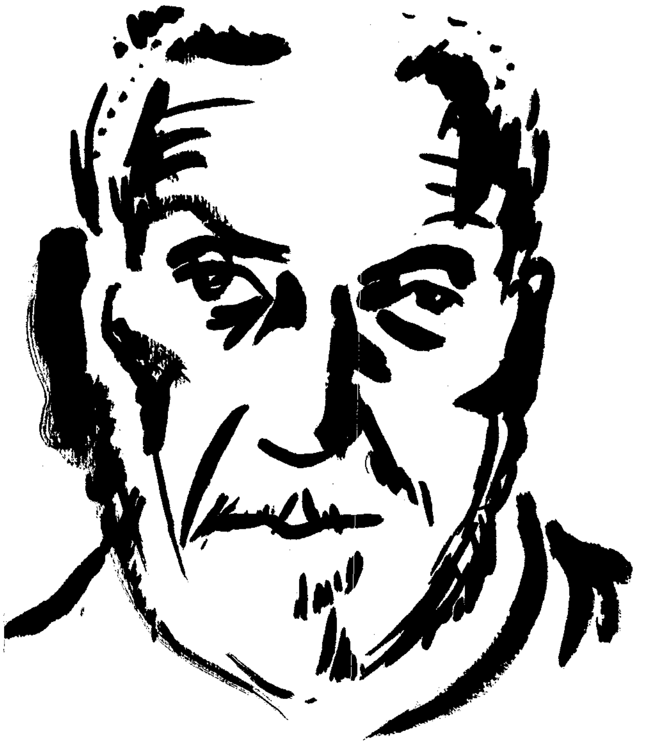
ART–Cont'd

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) / **Larry Rivers**—Approximately eighty prints, including the 1968 engravings from the 347 series. / "The Auction," a new three-dimensional work relating to African-American history, plus related drawings. Through June 4. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Sean Scully—The artist's signature stripes rendered in watercolor, oil, and pastel on paper. Through May 21. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

John Sloan (1871-1951)—Paintings dating from 1913, the year of the Armory Show, to 1918, when the artist summered in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Through June 4. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991)—Paintings and works on paper spanning seven decades, a number from the collection of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, in Mexico City. Through June 3. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)



Self-portrait by Anthony Caro (Emmerich).

"Form, Function, and Beauty: Early Nineteenth-Century French Watercolors of Domestic Objects"—Illustrations of dinnerware, toiletry kits, sewing baskets, and the like. Through May 8. (Bard Graduate Center, 18 W. 86th St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30.)

AUCTIONS

New on the Block—Lubin Galleries, founded in 1950, has recently been incorporated into the Chelsea Antiques Building. At its first auction in its new home (110 W. 25th St.), May 5 at 7, more than three hundred lots of paintings and sculptures by artists from the seventeenth century to the twentieth will be up for bidding. (For further information, call 924-3777.)

A Slice of Americana—The spring auction at Illustration House features a preliminary painting for Norman Rockwell's "Freedom of Speech" (1942). Created by Rockwell to illustrate Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms proclamation, it was first reproduced on posters promoting the sale of War Bonds. (Estimate: $80,000-$120,000.) Also included are works by N. C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle, and Maxfield Parrish. (96 Spring St. May 7 at 1. For further information, call 966-9444.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Getting It Together

"American Surrealist Photography," the current exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (through July 5), offers a heterogeneous assortment of forty-nine photographs from the permanent collection, some of which seem to have been smuggled in from outside the supposed theme. (What would curators do if they couldn't hold up an art-historical category, as a sort of umbrella, over disparate groups of works?) Certain pictures—a nude by David Hare, for instance—are right at home in this context, but it's a stretch to see how some of the others represent American Surrealism. This in no way diminishes the pleasure in seeing works like Walker Evans' "Torn Movie Poster" (1930) or Aaron Siskind's abstract-looking "Chicago, Corrugated Surface" (1953). It's just that they would be equally suited to any number of other themes.

When the images in this exhibition truly are surreal, the show really gets to the heart of the matter. A 1933 photograph by James Thrall Soby depicts a shape that looks like a nude female body but turns out to be made of stone. The form, which is partly covered by a curtain of dangling, mussed-up braids, has pearlike contours. A puzzled-looking couple were standing in front of the picture the other day. "What the hell is that?" the man asked. "It's really weird," the woman said. Now, that's Surrealism.

William Abranowicz—Forty delicately lit black-and-white prints. Through June 4. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Lynn Davis—Photographs of religious and architectural artifacts in Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand. Through May 21. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Robert Glenn Ketchum—Landscapes in Alaska and the Hudson Valley. Through May 28. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War." A remarkable set of photographs by Carole Gallagher, documenting the victims of radioactive fallout in the Western United States. . . . ¶ Bright, candy-colored photographs of life in northern New Mexico, by Alex Harris. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum, the China Institute, P. S. 1, and the Schomburg Center.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Fearless

Why doesn't Stephen Hough enjoy a higher profile in New York's concert scene? The thirty-two-year-old Englishman is one of the most accomplished, thoughtful, and distinctive pianists of his generation, and his schedule explodes with solo and orchestral engagements in nearly every other European and American musical center. But New Yorkers can catch him only once this season, on May 7 at Washington Irving High School.

Maybe ultra-modern New York has trouble figuring out a pianist who seems to have sprung from the pianistic golden age of a century ago. Technically fearless, he possesses breathtaking velocity, razzle-dazzle octaves, and every knuckle-bending trick in the book—but he doesn't make a big deal about it. He knows how to express the late-Romantic "grand gesture" without being pompous. The big concertos—Liszt, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, Bartók—suit him fine, but he's just as likely to champion a less celebrated one by Hummel or Lowell Liebermann. In recital he's sure to save room for salon miniatures redolent of potted palms and enchanted nymphs—morsels that embarrass both player and listener when offered with less patrician sincerity than Hough brings to them. He also makes his own old-style transcriptions; two of his most astonishing explore Richard Rodgers' "My Favorite Things" and "March of the Siamese Children." More Rodgers-Hough may be in the offing. "I think a 'Carousel' waltz could be done," Hough reports. "I've experimented with it at the piano. To get the real sweep of it, you need a sort of orchestral sound, which worries me a bit. But we'll see."

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

New York Grand Opera Company—Vincent La Selva discusses "Turandot," with performances of selected scenes. (Weill Recital Hall. May 6 at 8.)

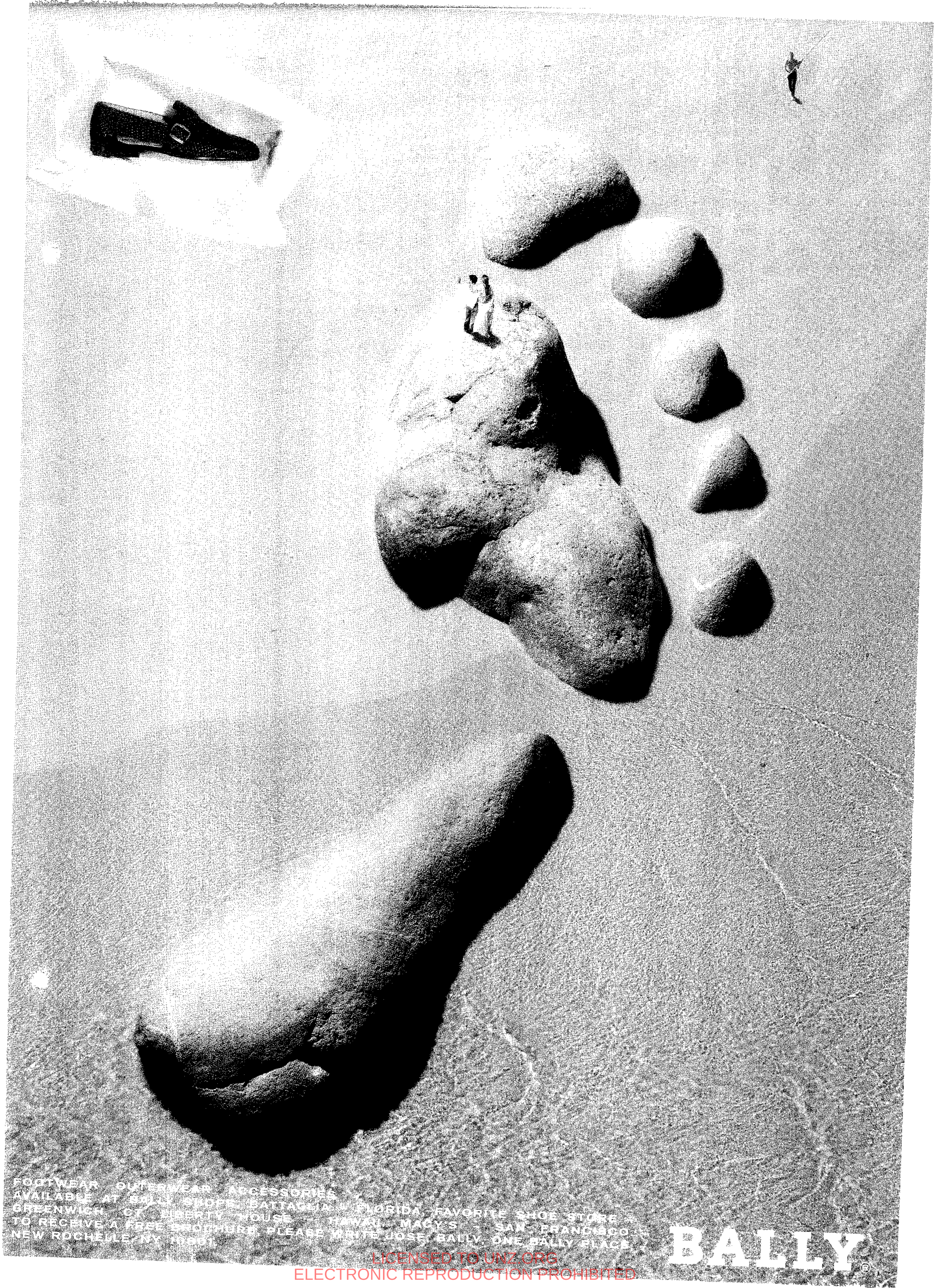
Amato Opera Company—Final performances of "Falstaff," in a macaronic Italian-and-English production. (Amato Opera Thea[illegible], 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May [illegible] at 7:30 and May 8 at 2:30.)

"Play of Daniel"—The medieval liturgical drama, performed in a concert version by the Schola Cantorum Quem Quaeritis of the Netherlands. (Church of the Transfiguration, Fifth Ave. at 29th St. May 8 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

New Opera of Moscow—Yevgeni Kolobov conducts an abridged, semi-staged performance of Glinka's "Ruslan and Lyudmila." (Avery Fisher Hall. May 9 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, André Previn conducting. May 5 and May 7 at 8 and May 6 at 2: Prokofiev's "Classical"



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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

Symphony, Haydn's Symphony No. 82, and Elgar's "Enigma Variations." . . . ¶ May 10 at 6:45: The same program, but without the Prokofiev.

Sowerby Salute—John Welsh conducts the Fairfield Orchestra in music for organ and orchestra by Leo Sowerby, including his "Medieval Poem" and "Classic Concerto"; featuring organists David Craighead, Catharine Crozier, and William Trafka. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 249. May 4 at 8.)

Choir and Orchestra of St. Ignatius Loyola—Kent Tritle directs Rheinberger's F-Major Organ Concerto (with Christopher Creaghan), motets by Bruckner, and Mozart's "Coronation" Mass. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. May 4 at 8.)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts a composite Venetian Vespers by Vivaldi, with mezzo-soprano Reveka Mavrovitis and the Metropolitan Singers / The Greek Choral Society. (Alice Tully Hall. May 4 at 8.)

New York Madrigal Singers—Erik-Peter Mortensen directs music by Heinrich Isaac and Orlando Gibbons; with the Mannes College Collegium Instrumental Ensemble. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 4 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Riverside Choral Society—Patrick Gardner directs the chorus and orchestra in Beethoven's C-Major Mass and "Choral Fantasy" (featuring pianist Luba Sindler). (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 780-2181.)

Theodorakis Fest—The prolific Greek composer and political figure Mikis Theodorakis conducts three of his own works: "Epiphany," "The Ballad of Mauthausen," and "Axion Esti." Featuring the Contemporary Music Orchestra, the Chorus of Hellenic Radio and Television, the Macedonian Chorus, the Popular Orchestra (a folkloric ensemble), and soloists. (Carnegie Hall. May 6 at 8. The concert will be repeated on May 11 at Avery Fisher Hall.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Dennis Russell Davies conducts in a weekend devoted to Stravinsky and his Russian musical sources. May 6 at 8: A suite from Rimsky-Korsakov's "Le Coq d'Or" and Scriabin's "Poem of Ecstasy," as well as Stravinsky's "Scherzo Fantastique" and excerpts from "The Firebird." . . . May 7 at 8: Works by Glinka and Balakirev, Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring," and folk music that inspired the latter (featuring the Pokrovsky Ensemble). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. Lectures, beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, *precede both concerts.*) . . . ¶ *May 8, from* 1 to 7: Lectures, a slide show, and performances by members of the orchestra, the Pokrovsky Ensemble, and four Yamaha Disklaviers; focussing on "Renard" and "Les Noces." (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. For information about tickets to all events, call 1-718 636-4100.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless orchestra performs Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto, Ravel's "Pavane pour une Infante Défunte," and Bartók's Divertimento; soprano Dawn Upshaw is featured in Earl Kim's "Where Grief Slumbers" and three Bach arias. (Carnegie Hall. May 7 at 8.)

Cappella Oratoriana—Dennis Bernard Delaney directs the choir and period-instrument ensemble in motets and spiritual madrigals of the Venetian tradition, including works by Giovanni Gabrieli, Gioseffo Zarlino, Alessandro Grandi, and Monteverdi (his six-voiced Magnificat and selections from his "Selva Morale e Spirituali"). (Oratory Church of St. Boniface, Willoughby and Duffield Sts., Brooklyn. May 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 875-2096.)

Grande Bande—Frederick Renz directs Pergolesi's Stabat Mater (with soprano Tamara Crout and mezzo-soprano Karen Clark Young), as well as concerti grossi by Corelli and Vivaldi. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 7 at 8 and May 8 at 3. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Choir of St. Luke's Church—David Shuler directs a program of German Renaissance and Baroque Easter music, by Isaac and Schütz; with the New York Cornet and Sacbut Ensemble and organist William Trafka. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. 633-2167. May 8 at 4.)

Pomerium—Alexander Blachly directs a-cappella German choral music, including works by Lassus, Schütz, and three Bachs (Johann Christoph, Johann Michael, and Johann Sebastian). (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 9 at 8.)

American Boychoir—James Litton directs choral classics and lighter works. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 757-7013, ext. 3003. May 10 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Lunchtime Music—Outdoor, fair-weather concerts in Bryant Park. May 4 and May 6: The Ethos Percussion Group. . . . ¶ May 9: CELLO (a quartet of cellists). (Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. Afternoons at 12:30. No tickets necessary.)

Cheryl Studer—Soprano, performing songs by Rossini, Schubert, Debussy (his "Ariettes Oubliées"), Wolf, Strauss, and Barber; with pianist Irwin Gage. (Carnegie Hall. May 4 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing works by Cage, Debussy (his Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp), Jeffery Cotton, and Tania León. (Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway. May 4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 840-7470.)

Bargemusic—Members of the Brentano String Quartet perform quartets by Mozart (in D Major, K. 499) and Berg, as well as Mozart's C-Minor String Quintet (K. 406, with violist Maria Lambros Kannen assisting). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 5 at 7:30 and May 8 at 4.)

Morrie Sherry—Clarinettist, performing sonatas by Brahms (his Second) and Poulenc, Lutoslawski's "Dance Preludes," Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, and a new work by Jeffrey Levine; with pianist Ron Levy and assisting instrumentalists. (Weill Recital Hall. May 5 at 8.)

Marc Ponthus—Continuing his survey of the solo-piano works of Stockhausen. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 5 at 8.)

André Watts—The pianist performs Mozart's Rondos in D Major (K. 485) and A Minor (K. 511), Schubert's Two Scherzi (D. 593), Beethoven's F-Minor Sonata (Op. 57, the "Appassionata"), Janáček's Sonata "I. X. 1905," Berio's "Wasserklavier," Liszt's "Jeux d'Eau à la Villa d'Este," and six of Chopin's études. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 6 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—P[illegible]forming Schubert's Trio in B-Flat Major, Beethoven's Variations in E-Flat Major (Op. 44), and Schumann's Trio No. 1. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 6-7 at 8.)

Stephen Hough—The pianist performs Copland's Piano Variations, Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Haydn's F-Minor Variations, and salon-scale works by Tchaikovsky, Rach-

CAROLYN GOWDY

LISTENING BOOTH

Mozart: Piano Music for 4 Hands (András Schiff/George Malcolm) (London); **For Two to Play** (Davitt Moroney/Olivier Baumont) (Virgin Classics). Schiff has professed distaste for early pianos, but he makes an exception to join his teacher for an hour of Mozart's four-hand music on a piano the composer is reputed to have owned. The elegantly incised phrasing and articulation that make Schiff a consummate Mozartean on his accustomed modern Bösendorfer prove too much for this delicate circa-1780 instrument. With Malcolm supporting the onslaught, the disk provides ammunition for detractors of period instruments. (Naysayers might want to suspend judgment until they hear fortepianists Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin play similar Mozartiana at the Frick Collection, on May 8.)

On "For Two to Play," a four-hand recital by Moroney and Baumont, a 1750 Stehlin harpsichord resonates lusciously, and the musicians are perfectly matched in spirit and ensemble as they stroll graciously through an eighteenth-century pleasure garden populated by Handel, Mozart, J.C. Bach, and others. (They also take a detour to check out some earlier English virginal works.) It's a treat throughout, and the exuberant concluding arrangement of Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus may make you laugh out loud, as it doubtless did the performers.

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maninoff, and Kreisler. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. May 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

Eldar Nebolsin—Pianist, performing Schubert's A-Minor Sonata (D. 537) and works by Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 7 at 8.)

Wendy Rolfe—Performing chamber works on a Baroque flute made of glass; with an assisting ensemble. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. May 8 at 11 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Bang on a Can Marathon—A daylong international showcase of the new, including music by Górecki, Xenakis, Ralph Shapey, Nick Didovsky, Michael Gordon, David Lang, Bunita Marcus, Steve Martland, Michael Torke, Lois V. Vierk, and others; featuring the Bang on a Can All-Stars, the Cassatt String Quartet, Icebreaker, Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, and the Netherlands Wind Ensemble. (Alice Tully Hall. May 8, from 2:30 to 10:30.)

Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin—The fortepianists perform works by Mozart for piano four-hands and for two pianos. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. May 8 at 5.)

Brahms at Twilight—Clarinettist Jo-Ann Sternberg, cellist Zwi Plesser, and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform Brahms' Clarinet Trio. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 8 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

André Emelianoff and Evelyne Crochet—The cellist and the pianist perform music by Schumann, Brahms (his E-Minor Sonata and "Viola" Songs), Joan Tower (the première of her "Très Lent"), David Sanford, Richard Lee, and Amanda Harberg; with several assisting artists. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 8 at 7:30.)

Sylvan Winds—Performing Villa-Lobos's "Quintet en Forme de Chôros," Milhaud's "Suite after Corrette," Enescu's "Dixtuor," and an orchestration of movements from Debussy's "Children's Corner." (Weill Recital Hall. May 9 at 8.)

American String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn (in F Major, Op. 77, No. 2) and Kenneth Fuchs (the première of his Quartet No. 2, subtitled "Where Have You Been?"), as well as Bruckner's F-Major Quintet (with

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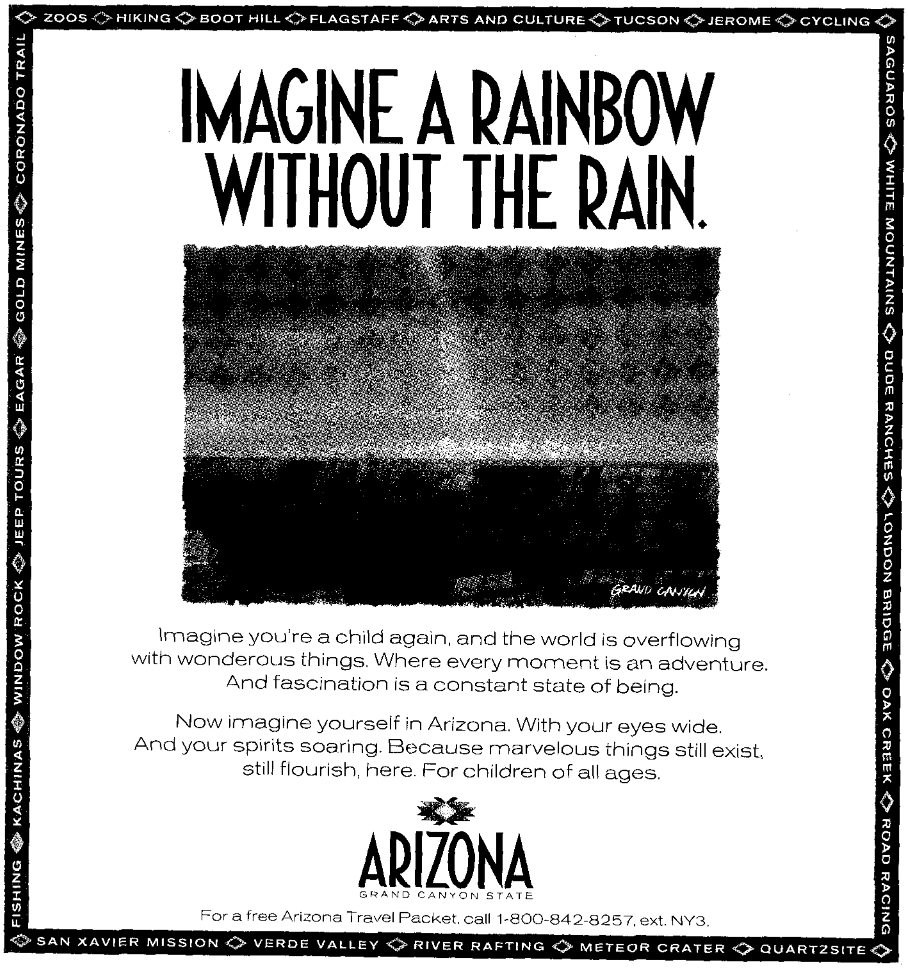
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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

violist Michael Tree assisting). (Alice Tully Hall. May 9 at 8.)

William Moersch—Playing recent music for marimba. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 9 at 8.)

Ahn Trio—Playing piano trios by Haydn, Kirchner, and Brahms (in B Major). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 10 at 2.)

VineyardMusicke—Period-instrument performances of music by teacher-and-student dyads, including Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau and his pupil Handel, and teacher Johann Sebastian Bach and his student Johann Ludwig Krebs. (Liederkranz Foundation, 6 E. 87th St. May 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 353-3874.)

Karen Scoville—Pianist, performing music by Soler, Mendelssohn, Emma Lou Diemer, Chopin, and Ravel. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 10 at 8.)

Musicians' Accord—Playing works by Beth Wiemann (a première), Jing Jing Luo, Richard Kassel, and Sheila Silver. (Weill Recital Hall. May 10 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Naked City—City Lore, New York City's storehouse for urban folk culture, will screen twelve hours of films and videos, in a festival called *"Streetlife: Exposing the Naked* City." The marathon is scheduled for May 7, from 11 to 11, and will include work by JoAnne Akalaitis, William H. Whyte, and the Office of War Information. On May 6 at 6, a panel discussion, "On the Streets: Who Controls the Urban Environment," will be followed by a screening at 8:45 of Jonathan Demme's "Cousin Bobby," about his cousin Robert Castle, an activist priest. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Square S., at Macdougal St. For schedule and ticket information, call 529-1955.)

Amanaka'a—The concluding sessions of Amazon Week V, a series of roundtable discussions and workshops concerning the preservation of the rain forest. The conference, sponsored by Amanaka'a, runs through May 11. (For schedule information, or to volunteer, call 674-4646.)

Celebrating Celluloid—Actors Charlie Chin and Margaret Cho will appear at the Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival, which this year is celebrating Asian-Americans in cinema. Performances of traditional and contemporary Asian-influenced music and dance will be featured, in addition to film stills, posters, and video clips. (Union Square Park, 14th St. and Broadway. May 7, from 11 to 6. No tickets necessary.)

Horsing Around—The Park Service's finest, mounted division, will compete at the Equestrian Fair, at Coney Island's Steeplechase Park, Surf Ave. and W. 19th St., Brooklyn. Categories include obstacle-course negotiation and equipment maintenance. Pony rides and a miniature-model-horse exhibit will also be featured. (May 7, from 10:30 to 5. For more information, call 1-718 965-8975.)

I Have Seen the Best Minds of My Generation at a Symposium—"Revolutionary Poetry" is the topic of this year's four-day Poetry Project symposium. Allen Ginsberg and Ed Sanders will be among those reading and serving on such panels as "Good-Bad, Hi-Lo: The Taste of Revolution." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-0910. May 5 at 8; May 6-7, from 10 to 10; and May 8 at 2:30.)

For Crafty Moms—The fifteenth annual Mother's Day Crafts on Columbus fair will offer hand-painted silk clothing, ceramics, and photography. (Columbus Ave. between 77th and 81st Sts. May 7-8, from 10 to 6. Also May 14-15.)

Ahoy!—Tune your pitch pipe, roll up your sleeves, and swab the decks at the annual South Street Seaport cleanup on May 7, from 9 to 4. (To register, call 669-9445.)

Dutch Treat—The tulip is celebrating its four-hundredth year of cultivation. At the New York Botanical Garden more than seventeen thousand flowers will participate. Events honoring the flower's past will include a performance by Dutch dancers, on May 8 at 1 and 2. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. May 7-8, from 11 to 4. Admission by contribution.)

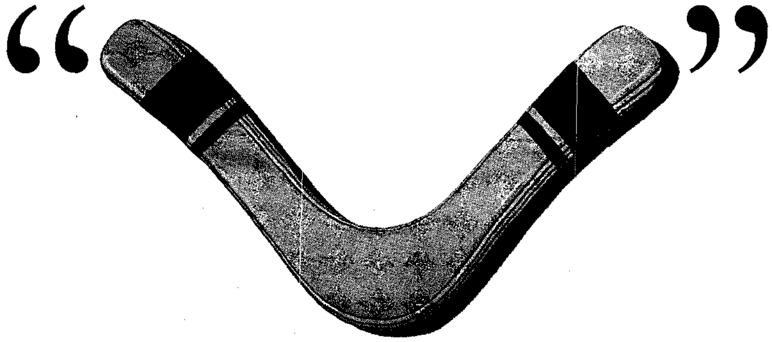
Commedia Tonight—I Giullari di Piazza will present a Renaissance spring-rites evening, featuring a commedia dell'arte version of Don Giovanni. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Cathedral House, Amsterdam Ave. at 110th St. May 5 at 6:30. For information about benefit tickets, which include dinner, call 431-7179.)

Marathon Stroll—The Shorewalker's Great Saunter, a thirty-two-mile walk around the perimeter of Manhattan, will separate the strutters from the straphangers. (May 7, from 7:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. For more information, call 330-7686.)

Brooklyn Bourgeois—A symposium on Louise Bourgeois, in conjunction with the museum's current exhibition of her art, "The Locus of Memory, Works 1982-1993." (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. 1-718 638-5000, ext. 230. May 7, from 10 to 4.)

Ceres Series—Ceres Gallery will offer two benefit poetry readings. May 5 at 7:30: Barbara Guest and James Sherry. . . . May 6 at 7: Andrea Brown and Molly Peacock. (584 Broadway. Tickets at the door on the nights of the reading.)

Readings—May 4 at 6:30: The Selected Shorts Series presents a program titled "Urgencies," which will include Laura Esterman reading "The School," by Donald Barthelme. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ May 5 at 7: Jane Cooper, Edward Field, Galway Kinnell, Thomas Lux, and Sharon Olds will read from "The Sanity of Earth and Grass," a posthumous collection of poetry by Robert Winner. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 6 at 7: Galway Kinnell will read from his own poetry. (D'Agostino Hall, New York University, 108 W. 3rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 6 at 8: Fay Chiang and Michael Cunningham will read from their own work. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. For information about tickets, call 875-4128.) . . . ¶ May



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9 at 7:30: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., will read from his memoir, "Colored People." (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ May 10 at 7: Peter Cameron will read from his novel "The Weekend." (Three Lives & Company, 154 W. 10th St., at Waverly Pl.)

Walks & Tours—May 7 at 1: Big Onion and Radical Walking Tours will co-host a stroll around lower Manhattan, offering two perspectives on its history, people, and events. For more information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ May 7 at 1: "Invitation to Brooklyn" House Tours will take in the houses of the Heights. For more information, call 1-718 858-9193.

Memoranda—May 8: Hi, Mom. . . . ¶ May 10, from 11:48 A.M. to 3:20 P.M.: The last annular eclipse of the sun visible from North America until the year 2012. Covering eighty-four per cent of the sun, this partial eclipse can be best seen at about 1:35 P.M. The curious are cautioned against looking directly at the sun during the event. (For information on related activities, call Liberty Science Center at 1-201 200-1000.)

SPORTS

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; the Yankees at Yankee Stadium, and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Boston Red Sox, May 6 at 7:05 and May 7-8 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Indians, May 9-10 at 7:05.

Mets—Vs. the San Francisco Giants, May 4 at 1:40.

CHAMPIONSHIP HOCKEY

Ice Work—Having iced the Islanders in four straight games, the Rangers will face the Washington Capitals in the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs. As of press time, the Devils had split, 3-3, against the Buffalo Sabres. If they win, they'll face either the Boston Bruins or the Montreal Canadiens.

CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL

Local Ball—In basketball's answer to a subway series, the Knicks and the Nets are taking it to the hoop in a best-of-five-games series, in the first round of National Basketball Association playoffs, which began April 29.

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Dance Arts—New York Theatre Ballet presents the première of "The Magic Rose: A Tale of Beauty and the Beast," an hour-long piece. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 5-6 at 4:30 and 6:30, and May 7-8 at 1 and 4:30.)

"Happy Concerts for Young People"—The Little Orchestra Society, conducted by Dino Anagnost, performs Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf" and Gail Kubik's "Gerald McBoing Boing." Recommended ages: four to ten. Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. May 7 at 11 and 1.)

Whale of a Good Time—In honor of Mother's Day, the Aquarium will spotlight its three beluga whale mamas and their offspring. Whale, penguin, and walrus feedings are scheduled throughout the day. Visitors can also check out the new "Sharks Alive" exhibit and avail themselves of the opportunity to touch a ray (just what Mom always wanted). (W. 8th St. and the Boardwalk, Coney Island, Brooklyn. 1-718 265-3474. May 8, from 10 to 5.)

Martial Arts—A group of expert young Tae Kwon Do students (ages eight to twelve) from Seoul will demonstrate their skills in an Asia Society program. (Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. May 10 at 6:30.)

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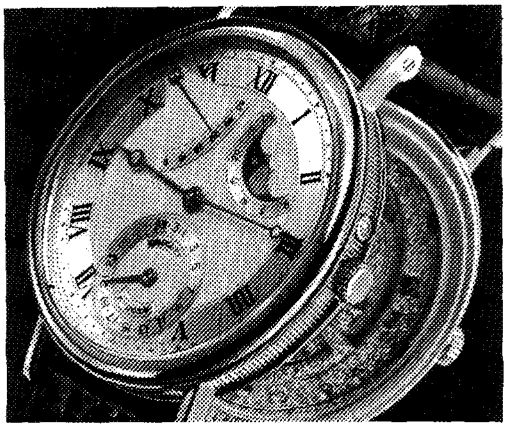

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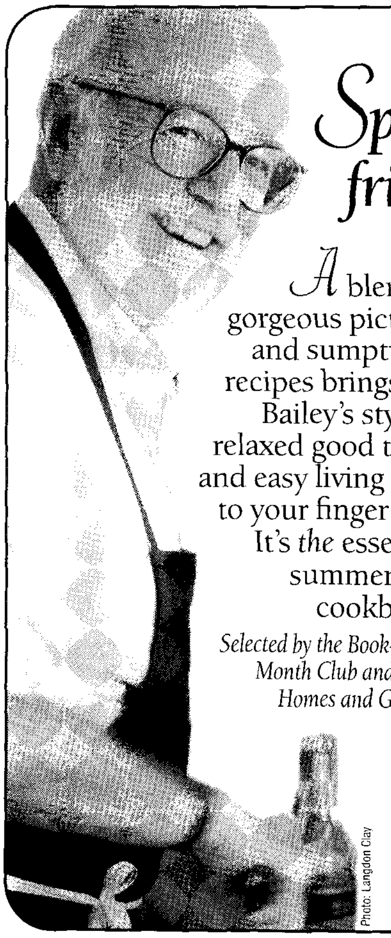

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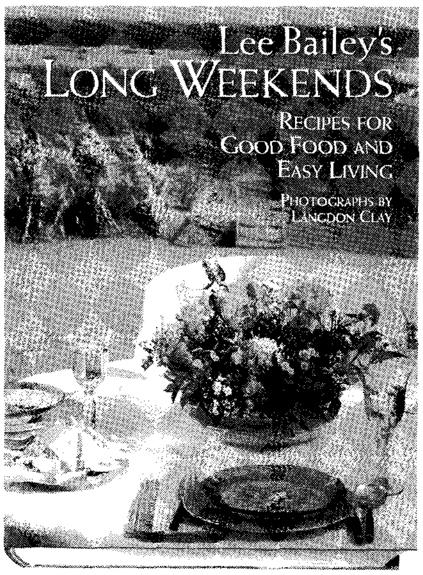
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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Backbeat" (†).
Theatre 2: "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cronos" (directed by Guillermo del Toro, in English and Spanish).
Theatre 4: Through May 5: "Savage Nights" (Cyril Collard, in French). From May 6: "Kika" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish).
Theatre 5: "Sirens" (†).
Theatre 6: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"I Only Want You to Love Me" (1976, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian), with Joe Pesci, Brendan Fraser, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 2: Through May 5: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth); and "The Hudsucker Proxy" (Joel Coen), with Tim Robbins. From May 6: "Dream Lover" (Nicholas Kazan).
Theatre 3: "Bad Girls" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: The Fifth Annual Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, along with a retrospective of the works of Margarethe von Trotta.
Theatre 2: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie), with Harley Jane Kozak and Elizabeth McGovern.
Theatre 3: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).
Theatre 4: "Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant), with Eric Stoltz.
Theatre 5: "You So Crazy" (†).
Theatre 6: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 7: The Fifth Annual Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, along with a retrospective of the works of Margarethe von Trotta.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Babyfever" (Henry Jaglom).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 3: "Germinal" (Claude Berri, in French).
Theatre 4: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 5: "Brainscan" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Inkwell" (Matty Rich).
Theatre 7: "Like Water for Chocolate" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).
Theatre 2: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie).
Theatre 4: Through May 5: "Cops and Robbersons" (Michael Ritchie). From May 6: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki), with Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 5: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 6: "Backbeat" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).
Theatre 2: "Sirens" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 5: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie), with Harley Jane Kozak and Elizabeth McGovern. From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).
Theatre 4: "Bad Girls" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Brainscan" (†).
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (†).
Theatre 3: "No Escape" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).
Theatre 2: "Serial Mom" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Bad Girls" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"In Custody" (Ismail Merchant, in Urdu).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Brainscan" (†).

THE MOVIES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 34.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "PCU" (Hart Bochner).
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki), with Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 2: "The Inkwell" (Matty Rich), with Larenz Tate and Joe Morton.
Theatre 3: "Babyfever" (Henry Jaglom).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List."
Theatre 4: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 5: Through May 5: "Chasers" (Dennis Hopper). From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (Jane Campion), with Holly Hunter, Harvey Keitel, and Sam Neill.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie), with Harley Jane Kozak and Elizabeth McGovern.
Theatre 2: Through May 5: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming). From May 6: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Naked in New York" (Dan Algrant).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).
Theatre 2: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian), with Joe Pesci, Brendan Fraser, and Moira Kelly.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Sirens" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Backbeat" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through May 5: "Like Water for Chocolate" (†). From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Paper" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bad Girls" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "PCU" (Hart Bochner).
Theatre 2: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 3: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 4: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).
Theatre 5: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 6: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian).
Theatre 7: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie), with Harley Jane Kozak and Elizabeth McGovern.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Inkwell" (Matty Rich), with Larenz Tate and Joe Morton.
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "La Scorta" (directed by Ricky Tognazzi, in Italian).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl" (†) and "Sunday's Children" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through May 5: "PCU" (Hart Bochner). From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through May 5: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, in Mandarin) and "Piano" (Jane Campion). From May 6: "Dream and Memory" (Ann Hu, in Mandarin and English).
Theatre 2: Through May 5: "A Tale of Winter" (†). From May 6: "The Blue Kite" (†).
Theatre 3: "Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski).
Theatre 4: "I Am My Own Woman" (Rosa Von Praunheim, in German).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "PCU" (Hart Bochner).
Theatre 2: "The Paper" (†).
Theatre 3: "Bad Girls" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Inkwell" (Matty Rich), with Larenz Tate and Joe Morton.
Theatre 5: "Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.
Theatre 6: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian), with Joe Pesci, Brendan Fraser, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 7: Through May 5: "Schindler's List." From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).
Theatre 8: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).
Theatre 9: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "You So Crazy" (†).
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (†).
Theatre 3: "Sankofa" (Haile Gerima).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through May 5: "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf" (Ken Olin).
From May 6: "When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson, and James Fox.
Theatre 2: "Shadowlands" (Richard Attenborough), with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger.
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 4: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus).
Theatre 5: "Naked" (Mike Leigh), with David Thewlis.
Theatre 6: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through May 5: "The Paper" (†).
From May 6: "That's Entertainment! III" (Bud Friedgen and Michael J. Sheridan).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
May 4: Theatre closed.
May 5: "Savage Nights" (Cyril Collard, in French).
From May 6: "Dream Lover" (Nicholas Kazan).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Sirens" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "The House of the Spirits" (Bille August).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (†).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"High Lonesome: The Story of Bluegrass Music" (Rachel Liebling), a documentary.

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MOVIE HOUSES-Cont'd

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Germinal" (Claude Berri, in French).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Bitter Moon" (Roman Polanski).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Four Weddings and a Funeral" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Bad Girls" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "A Tale of Winter" (†).
Theatre 2: "Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" (†).
Theatre 3: "Ivan and Abraham" (Yolande Zauberman, in Yiddish).
Theatre 4: Through May 5: "The Piano" (Jane Campion). From May 6: "Kika" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish).
Theatre 5: Through May 5: "The Blue Kite" (†). From May 6: "Red Rock West" (†).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Inkwell" (Matty Rich), with Larenz Tate and Joe Morton.
Theatre 3: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian), with Joe Pesci, Brendan Fraser, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 4: "Brainscan" (†).
Theatre 5: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 6: "Threesome" (Andrew Fleming).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Babyfever" (Henry Jaglom).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through May 5: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller). From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).
Theatre 2: "PCU" (Hart Bochner).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie), with Harley Jane Kozak and Elizabeth McGovern.
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

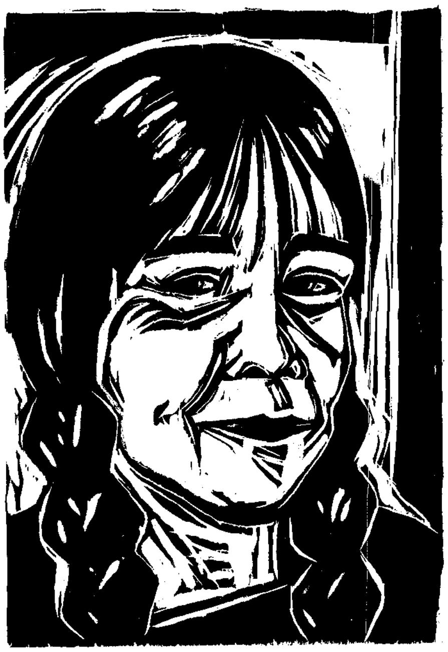
Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Serial Mom" (†).
Theatre 2: "No Escape" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 5: "Above the Rim" (Jeff Pollack), with Duane Martin, Tupac Shakur, and Marlon Wayans. Through May 6: "3 Ninjas Kick Back" (Charles T. Kanganis).
Theatre 4: "PCU" (directed by Hart Bochner).
Theatre 5: Through May 5: "Hans Christian Andersen's Thumbelina" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and "Chasers" (Dennis Hopper), with Tom Berenger, William McNamara, and Erika Eleniak. From May 6: "Being Human" (Bill Forsyth).
Theatre 6: "With Honors" (Alek Keshishian), with Joe Pesci, Brendan Fraser, and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 7: "Surviving the Game" (Ernest Dickerson).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Inkwell" (Matty Rich), with Larenz Tate and Joe Morton.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "You So Crazy" (†).
Theatre 2: "You So Crazy" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Favor" (Donald Petrie), with Harley Jane Kozak and Elizabeth McGovern.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Brainscan" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Bad Girls" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 5: "Leprechaun 2" (Rodman Flender), with Warwick Davis. From May 6: "Clean Slate" (Mick Jackson).



At Walter Reade Theatre, Tantoo Cardinal in "Where the Rivers Flow North."

MARGIE GREEVES

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
May 4: "Tell It to the Marines" (1926, directed by George Hill) and "After Midnight" (1927, Monta Bell).
May 5: "Trail of '98" (1928, Clarence Brown) and "Tide of Empire" (1929, Allan Dwan).
May 6-7: "The Wind" (1928, Victor Seastrom) and "La Bohème" (1926, King Vidor).
May 8: "Spite Marriage" (1929, Edward Sedgwick) and "The Patsy" (1928, King Vidor).
May 9: "The Big Parade" (1925, King Vidor) and "Proud Flesh" (1925, Vidor).
May 10: "The Magician" (1926, Rex Ingram) and "The Circle" (1925, Frank Borzage).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 4: "Diabolique" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse; and "Panique" (1946, Julien Duvivier; in French), with Viviane Romance, Michel Simon, and Paul Bernard.
May 5: "The Servant" (1963, Joseph Losey), with Dirk Bogarde; and "The Innocents" (†).
May 6-7: "Sunset Boulevard" (1950, Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson, William Holden, and Erich von Stroheim; and "All About Eve" (1950, Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Bette Davis and Anne Baxter.
May 8: "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor), with Rita Hayworth, Glenn Ford, and George Macready; and "The Lady from Shanghai" (†).
May 9: "Nights of Cabiria" (1957, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina; and "Il Bidone" ("The Swindlers"; 1955, Fellini; in Italian), with Broderick Crawford, Masina, and Richard Basehart.
May 10: "Young and Innocent" (1937, Alfred Hitchcock) and "Murder" (1930, Alfred Hitchcock).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 5 at 2:30: "Tobacco Road" (1941, directed by John Ford). . . . ¶ May 5 at 3 and 6: "The Anthropologist" (1992, Andrea Gschwendtner). . . . ¶ May 5 at 6: "Sergeant Rutledge" (1960, Ford). . . . ¶ May 5 at 8: "Donovan's Reef" (1963, Ford). . . . May 6 at 2:30, 6:30, and 8:30: "JLG by JLG" (1994, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). . . . ¶ May 6 at 3:30, 6, and 8: "Histoire du Cinéma, Parts 3 and 4" (1989, Godard; in French). . . . ¶ May 7 at 1: "Roy Lichtenstein—Reflections" (1990, Edgar Howard) and "James Rosenquist: Welcome to the Water Planet" (1990, Seth Schneidman and Maryte Kavaliauskas). . . . ¶ May 7 at 2: "Daïnah, the Half-Caste" (1931, Jean Grémillon; in French); and "Zero for Conduct" (†). . . . ¶ May 7 at 3: "Spiral Jetty" (1970, Robert Smithson) and "Sun Tunnels" (1978, Nancy Holt). . . . ¶ May 7 at 5: "The Marquise of O. . . ." (1976, Eric Rohmer; in German). . . . ¶ May 7 at 5 and May 8 at 1: Three Les Blank films. . . . ¶ May 8 at 2: "La Petite de Montparnasse" (1931, Hanns Schwarz and Max Vaucorbeil; in French). . . . ¶ *May 8 at 3: "Jack Levine:* Feast of Pure Reason" (1986, David Sutherland). . . . ¶ May 8 at 5: "A Man Escaped" (1956, Robert Bresson; in French). . . . ¶ May 8 at 5: "Changing Steps" (1989, Elliot Caplan and Merce Cunningham). . . . ¶ May 9 at 2:30: "Cousin, Cousine" (1976, Jean-Claude Tacchella; in French). . . . ¶ May 9 at 6: "If Paris Could Speak" (1955, Sacha Guitry; in French). . . . ¶ May 10 at 2:30: "L'Atalante" (1934, Jean Vigo; in French). . . . ¶ May 10 at 6: "Silver Powder" (1953, Abram Room; in Russian).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 4 at 2, 4, 6, and 8 and May 5 at 2 and 4: Four different programs of Merce Cunningham choreography on film and video. . . . ¶ May 6 at 2: "American Indian Dance Theater—Dances for the New Generation" (1993, Phil Lucas, Gary Robinson, and Hanay Geiogamah). . . . ¶ May 6 at 4:30, May 7 at 6:30, and May 9 at 8:45: "Imagining Indians" (1992, Victor Masayesva, Jr.). . . . ¶ May 6 at 8:30 and May 7 at 4: "A Gift to One, A Gift to Many—James Jackson Sr., Ojibwe Medicine Man" (1993). . . . ¶ May 7-8 at 2: "Native American Storytelling." . . . ¶ May 7 at 9 and May 9 at 6:15: "Kanehsatake—270 Years of Resistance" (1993, Alanis Obomsawin). . . . ¶ May 8 at 4 and May 10 at 2: *"He Wo Un Poh—Recovery in Native America"* (1993, Beverly Singer). . . . ¶ May 8 at 6:45, May 9 at 2, and May 10 at 4:15: "It Starts with a Whisper" (1993, Shelly Niro and Anna Gronau), "The Right to Be" (1993, Harriet Skye), and "Everything Has a Spirit" (1992, Ava Hamilton). . . . ¶ May 8 at 9: "Where the Rivers Flow North" (1994, Jay Craven), with Rip Torn and Tantoo Cardinal. Miss Cardinal will be present. . . . ¶ May 9 at 4:15: "The Peyote Road" (1993, Fidel Moreno and Gary Rhine).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A retrospective of films starring Joan Crawford. May 7 at 2: "Torch Song" (†). . . . ¶ May 7 at 4: "Female on the Beach" (1955, Joseph Pevney). . . . ¶ May 8 at 2: "Humoresque" (†). . . . ¶ May 8 at 4:30: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller).

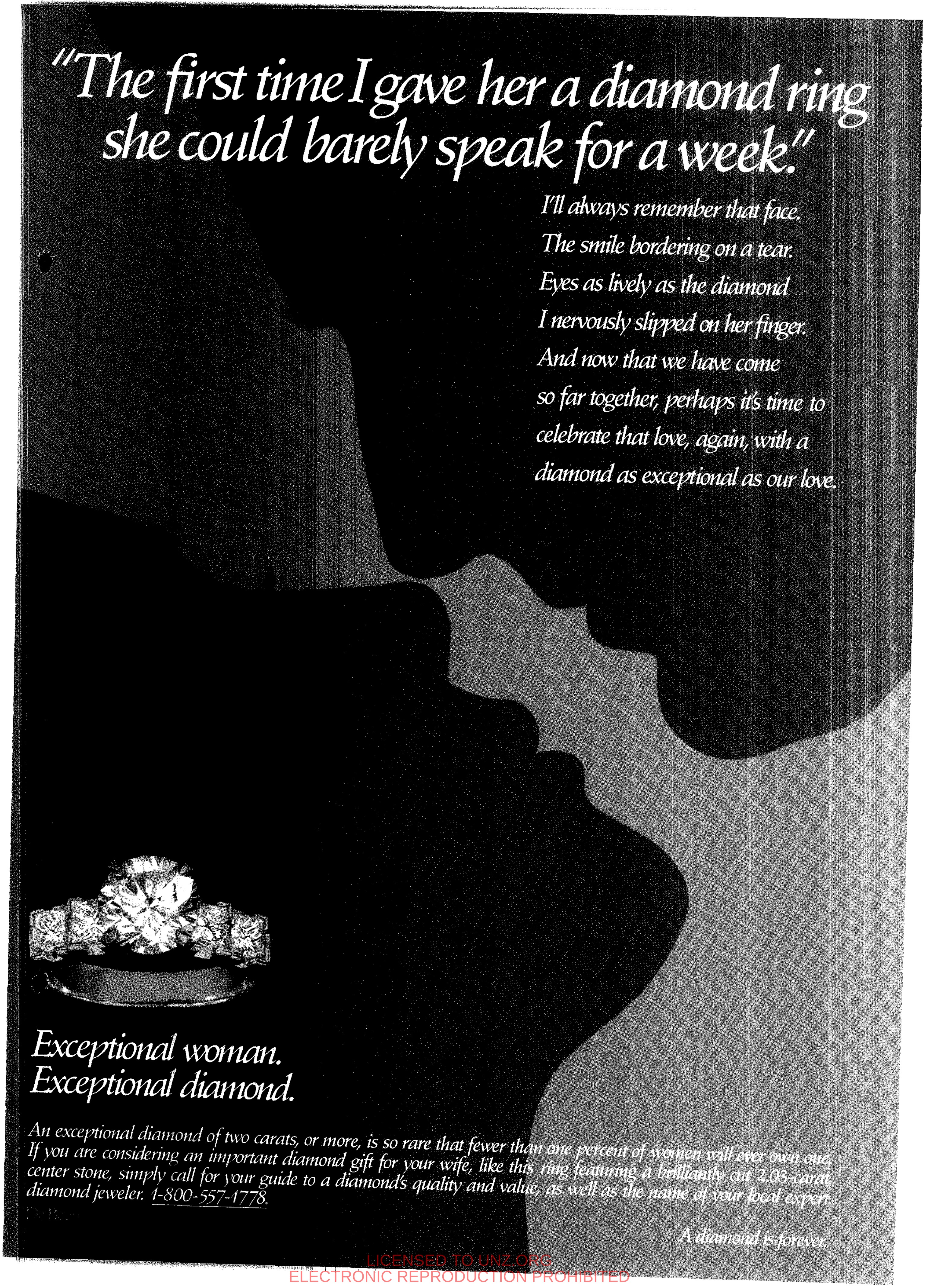
Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films by American independent filmmakers. May 10 at 7: "She's Gotta Have It" (1986, Spike Lee). . . . ¶ May 10 at 8:45: "Boyz N the Hood" (1991, John Singleton), with Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Larry Fishburne, Nia Long, Tyra Ferrell, and Angela Bassett.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 4 at 12:30, 3:30, and 7: "Louis, the Child King" (1992, Roger Planchon; in French).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A retrospective of films and videos by Willie Varela. Call for schedule and screening times.

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of films from Africa. May 8 at 2: "Life Is Rosy" (1987, Ngangura Mweze and Benoit Lamy; in French).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—May 8 at 1 and 5:50: "The Second Coming" (1993, Blair Underwood). . . . ¶ May 8 at 2:20 and 7:10: "Neria" (1992, Godwin Mawvru). . . . ¶ May 8 at 4:05: "Mapantsula" (1988, Oliver Schmitz). . . . ¶ May 9 at 6:30: "Brightness" (1987, Souleymane Cissé). . . . ¶ May 9 at 8:15: "Saaraba" (1988, Amadou Saalum Seck). . . . ¶ May 10 at 6:30: "Finza" (1990, Cheick Oumar Sisoka). . . . ¶ May 10 at 8:20: "God's Gift" (1982, Gaston Kaboré).



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MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Babyfever—A group of thirty-somethings obsess about their biological clocks in Henry Jaglom's latest film, which is set at a baby shower. Featuring Victoria Foyt (who co-wrote the script with Jaglom), Frances Fisher, Matt Salinger, Elaine Kagan, Zack Norman, and Eric Roberts. Opening May 4.

Being Human—Bill Forsyth ("Local Hero") wrote and directed this film about five men named Hector—all of them played by Robin Williams—in five different periods of human history. With John Turturro, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lorraine Bracco, and Lindsay Crouse. Opening May 6.

Clean Slate—Dana Carvey as a detective with a bad case of comic amnesia: every morning, he wakes up with no memory of the past. With Valeria Golina as the love interest and woman in distress. Also with James Earl Jones, Kevin Pollak, and Olivia d'Abo. Directed by Mick Jackson. Opening May 6.

Dream and Memory—Ann Hu's first film is about two middle-aged Chinese friends who were young artists and Red Guard activists during the Cultural Revolution. Years later, after one of them has moved to New York and the other has become a popular propagandist in China, they reconnect. In Mandarin and English. Opening May 6.

Dream Lover—Screenwriter Nicholas Kazan ("Patty Hearst," "Reversal of Fortune") makes his directorial début with this drama about the eerie relationship between an architect (James Spader) and a beautiful woman he thinks he knows (Mädchen Amick). Opening May 6.

Kika—Pedro Almodóvar's latest foray into kinky melodrama stars Verónica Forqué as an incurably optimistic beautician, Peter Coyote as her possibly homicidal housemate, and Victoria Abril as a tabloid-television personality out for revenge. Also with Alex Casanovas and Rossy de Palma. In Spanish. Opening May 6.

La Scorta—A political thriller, based on Judge Francesco Taurisano's campaign to clean up the Mafia in Sicily. With Carlo Cecchi as the magistrate, and Enrico Lo Verso, Claudio Amendola, Ricky Memphis, and Tony Sperandeo as the four bodyguards assigned to protect him. Directed by Ricky Tognazzi. In Italian. Opening May 4.

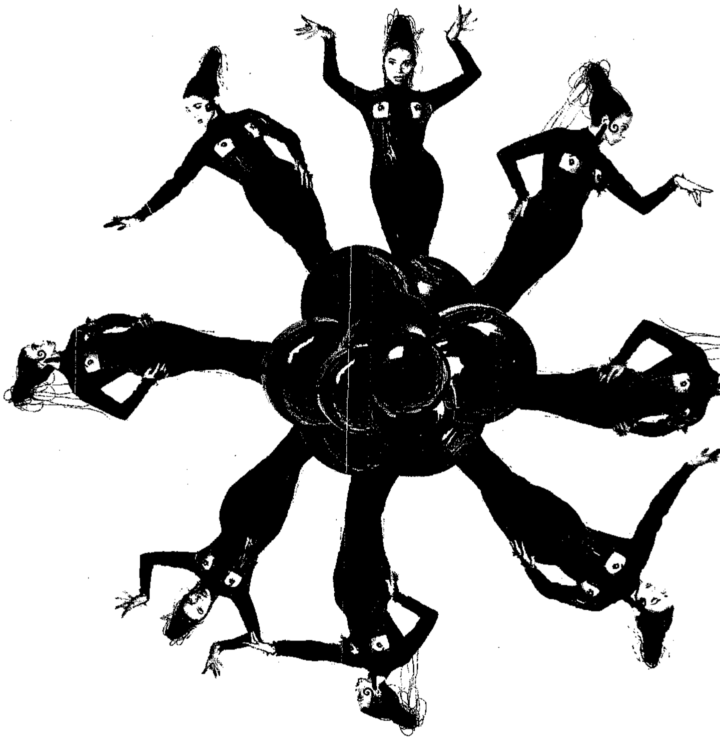
That's Entertainment! III—M-G-M raids its archives for a third medley of highlights from musicals. Gene Kelly and Lena Horne are among the hoofers and singers who introduce and narrate the segments. Directed by Bud Friedgen and Michael J. Sheridan. Opening May 6.

3 Ninjas Kick Back—The comic martial-arts adventures of three boys continue in this sequel to the 1992 kids' pic "3 Ninjas." Directed by Charles T. Kanganis. Opening May 6.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Backbeat—Iain Softley's movie tells the story of Stuart Sutcliffe (Stephen Dorff), who was John Lennon's best friend at the Liverpool College of Art and, for a short time, the bass player of the Beatles. The picture doesn't quite succeed in turning this obscure sideman into a pop-culture myth in his own right. In the period that the screenplay covers—roughly, from August, 1960, when the group played its first night-club gig in Hamburg, to April, 1962, when Sutcliffe dies of a brain hemorrhage—the Beatles were unambiguously John Lennon's band. And, despite all Softley's efforts to deflect our attention to the tragic ironies of Stuart's brief career, Lennon (Ian Hart) dominates the movie, too. When the picture concentrates on Lennon's edgy wit and on the fierce, joyful music that his band is making, it's terrific. But when it focusses on its nominal hero and his love affair with a worldly German bohemian (played by Sheryl Lee) it seems very ordinary. The script is by Softley, Michael Thomas, and Stephen Ward. The Beatles' music is re-created by a wonderful group of alternative-rock all-stars assembled by Don Was, including Thurston Moore, Mike Mills, Dave Grohl, and Greg Dulli.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/25/94.) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, and Tower East.)



Victoria Abril in "Kika," opening May 6.

JOHN DE FAZIO

Bad Girls—With Madeleine Stowe, Mary Stuart Masterson, Drew Barrymore, and Andie MacDowell; directed by Jonathan Kaplan. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

The Blue Kite—A refined, strong-minded political drama, all the more telling for being so quiet. The director, Tian Zhuangzhuang, is just the kind of casual satirist that the Chinese authorities could do without; the movie met fierce official resistance during postproduction, and Tian has now been banned from further filming. Here, he smiles at a country awash with banners and slogans, and makes you realize that opposition comes not from more of the same but from the bemused responses of provincial people too busy with their own lives to be led astray. The story begins, in 1953, with the death of Stalin, and lasts until 1967; in that time, a young boy named Tietou grows up and goes through three fathers, each of them laid low by persecution. Tietou may be a pain to his long-suffering mother, but his misbehavior is just the first stirring of a rebellious spirit. The movie seems clean and steady, a corrective to the lushness and extravagance that, for better or worse, has come to be seen as the house style of Chinese cinema. In Mandarin.—A.L. (5/2/94) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; through May 5. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through May 6.)

Brainscan—An interactive CD-ROM game called Brainscan gives its users the sensations of committing murder, but the gimmick goes haywire. What starts as a savage exploitation flick turns into a dopey doppelgänger story and then strains to become an anti-violence version of "A Christmas Carol." The movie generates some grisly humor and tension when introducing its antihero (played by the weirdly talented Edward Furlong), a high-school misfit and horror aficionado who plugs into Brainscan and sets off a cycle of real killing. But the pivotal homicide is clumsily staged, and when a harlequin who looks like Keith Richards on his worst hair day leaps from the video screen, any satiric comment on virtual reality devolves into facetious gross-out scenes. With T. Ryder Smith as "the Trickster," Frank Langella as a cop, and Amy Hargreaves as Furlong's nubile next-door neighbor. John Flynn directed Andrew Kevin Walker's script; Brian Owens gets story credit. —M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, 59th Street East Cinema, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Four Weddings and a Funeral—Everything that depicts nuptial chaos is funny—particularly Rowan Atkinson's self-contained bit as a novice priest who blows a mental fuse during a marriage service and soldiers on with panicky determination. But the central relationship, between a British commitment-phobe (Hugh Grant) and an all too easy American (the flat, inexplicable Andie MacDowell), makes for few sparks and less sense. Grant's goofy charm holds the comedy aloft—he rises like a fuzzy balloon. Mike Newell directed Richard Curtis's script.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, and Columbus Circle.)

Like Water for Chocolate—Alfonso Arau's sticky, lusty, and rather ludicrous movie is set on a Mexican ranch in 1910. The head of the family is the the unyielding Mama Elena (Regina Torne), who determines the destinies of her three daughters. The youngest, Tita (Lumi Cavazos), must stay at home and never marry. Needless to say, she promptly falls in love. It's the old story, passions trying to burst through the shell of repression, and it infects the rest of the film: well-behaved wedding guests suddenly grow weepy or horny, and the old social order is menaced by bands of roaming revolutionaries. But what should be a struggle turns into a giggle; Arau's style loses its balance, swooning into endless closeups of damp brows and heaving bosoms. Scripted by Laura Esquivel from her own novel. In Spanish. —A.L. (Village East Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . ¶ East 85th Street; through May 5.)

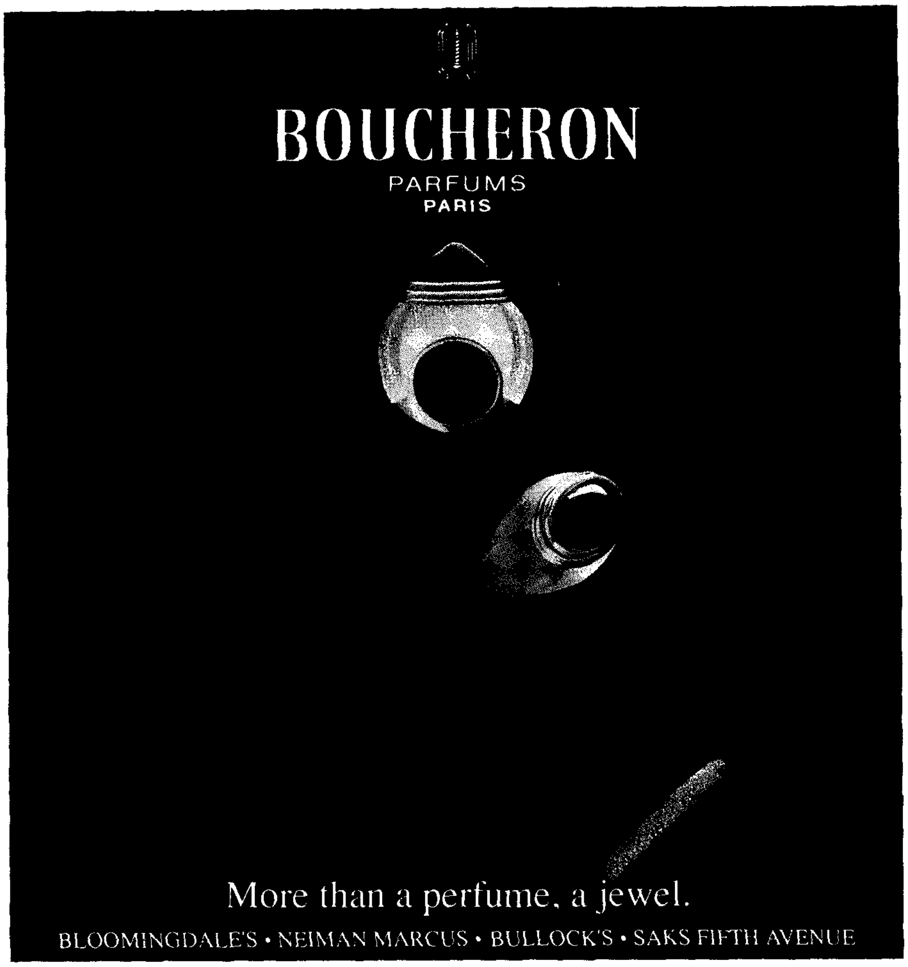
No Escape—With Ray Liotta, directed by Martin Campbell. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Paper—Ron Howard's big-city-newspaper comedy is a game try at reviving a great Hollywood genre. The movie—which follows Henry Hackett (Michael Keaton), the Metro editor of a struggling New York tabloid, through a single, absurdly gruelling day—gets most of its laughs by constantly piling fresh difficulties on top of already impossible circumstances. Keaton is at his best here, which means that his mind appears to be working at warp speed, and with a berserk, reckless lucidity. Randy Quaid, Marisa Tomei, Robert Duvall, and Jason Alexander create lively, funny characters for Keaton to bounce off, and Howard lets the actors' energy drive the movie. Unfortunately, some inappropriate yuppie philosophizing starts creeping in toward the end; it's clear that Howard and the screenwriters, David and Stephen Koepp, aren't quite willing to go all the way with the heartless, cynical wit of the genre.—T.R. (3/28/94) (Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through May 5.)

Red Rock West—This clever thriller about a goodhearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot ranks tops among low-budget neo-noirs. Taut and deadpan witty, it makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Dennis Hopper and J. T. Walsh do their freshest, snappiest work in years, and Lara Flynn Boyle is a tense, ambiguous love object. Most important, Cage's shaggy hangdog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. Dwight Yoakam contributes a piquant cameo as a tough, helpful truck driver.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Serial Mom—John Waters takes a risk and goes mainstream for his latest stab at zero-taste comedy. Kathleen Turner plays Beverly, a Baltimore housewife with a dentist husband (Sam Waterston), two nice kids, and a sideline in multiple murder. Turner looks inspired, even when running someone through with a poker, but there's nothing behind the inspiration; the movie doesn't bother to saddle her slayings with a motive, or grace them with much of a plot. Waters rigs the look of it, and makes things easy for himself; when life has the silly shine of a fifties commercial, you don't have to dig very deep to find dirt. The film is neither as funny nor as shocking as Waters might like to think, but Turner rescues it; she enjoys herself hugely, and hauls us along for the ride. Her sex-bomb charge may be defused, but her career as a queen bitch is just beginning.—A.L. (5/2/94) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Sirens—John Duigan removes the sting—and the thrill—from the concept of *épater les bourgeois* in this smug period comedy inspired by the life of painter Norman Lindsay (Sam Neill). Set in Australia's Blue Mountains in the thirties, it lavishes attention on Lindsay's nude models, who are amazons with attitude (bohemian, feminist, and Marxist); when an Anglican priest (Hugh Grant) tries to get Lindsay to withdraw a blasphemous art work from a touring exhibition, they twit the priest and sexually liberate his wife (Tara Fitzgerald). The debate is rigged on the hedonists' side, but Duigan's view of pagan sensuality is so uncomplicated and natural and life-affirming and wholesome that it's lulling. Duigan ultimately reduces Elle Macpherson and Kate Fischer (as Lindsay's top models), Pamela Rabe (as his model-wife), and Portia de Rossi (as a servant turned model who sheds her inhibitions) to human topography; his design is realized when he poses them and Fitzgerald naked on a ridge.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, and 57th St. Playhouse.)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18F

IN BRIEF-Cont'd

DANIEL MAJA

Sunday's Children—Daniel Bergman's film—which is based on an autobiographical novel by his famous father, Ingmar—is mostly set in and around a summerhouse in the late twenties, and the picture has a lazy, daydreamy rhythm. There's no narrative momentum to speak of: all that holds the story together is the muddled consciousness of its protagonist, eight-year-old Ingmar (Henrik Linnros), nicknamed Pu, who's trying—and largely failing—to understand the sensations that seem to come at him from everywhere. Daniel Bergman gives this rambling memoir a shimmering, lyrical clarity, and his direction of the actors is extraordinary; he gets a superb performance from Thommy Berggren, who plays Pu's minister father, Erik. The movie is no more than a series of random vignettes, but most of them are striking and evocative, and the undirected, one-thing-after-another flow of recollection becomes surprisingly moving: the apparently artless style reflects, with uncanny precision, the indiscriminate receptivity of a child's imagination. Cinematography by Tony Forsberg. In Swedish.—T.R. (4/25/94) (Film Forum.)

A Tale of Winter—The second film in Eric Rohmer's current cycle, "Tales of the Four Seasons" (the first, "A Tale of Springtime," was released here in 1992), is, as usual, a slow, closely observed story of romantic indecisiveness. The heroine, Félicie (Charlotte Véry), is an irritating woman, of the sort that Rohmer often treats with great tenderness: she keeps two ardent suitors at arm's length while she clings to the faint possibility of a reunion with a long-lost love. She's so stubbornly idealistic that she can't accept the imperfect joys available to her. It's Rohmer's pleasure to reward her for her fanaticism and her irrational patience. His aesthetic philosophy is to stake out, and hold, a position from which he can ambush the rare life-altering event, the moment of grace, the miracle. He captures one of those at the end of this picture, and you smile at its aptness and its beauty. In French.—T.R. (4/11/94) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through May 5.)

Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould—Glenn Gould, as scorned and revered as any figure in modern music, died in 1982. François Girard's new movie honors his strong-willed, idiosyncratic genius with a suitably offbeat approach: a bunch of little films, none lasting more than a few minutes, all of them angling for a new take on the pianist's life and work—thirty-two ways of looking at Glenn Gould. Scenes from his boyhood and professional career are neatly dramatized; the Canadian actor Colm Feore plays the adult Gould, though he never, thank goodness, tries to reproduce his manner at the keyboard. In between come interviews, dashes of animation, and even a sequence shot in X-ray. The whole enterprise is designed to skirt the traditional traps of the music movie; instead of a laborious bio-pic, we get a sly, quick-witted meditation on a character always likely to elude our grasp. The finale—a Gould recording of Bach is carried into deep space by a Voyager spacecraft—leaves you gawking.—A.L. (4/18/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl—This German documentary is a profoundly unsettling three hours at the movies. Riefenstahl, now ninety-one years old, made two brilliant documentaries—"Triumph of the Will" (1935) and "Olympia" (1938)—under the aegis of the Nazi Party. She was known as "Hitler's favorite filmmaker," but has always insisted that her movies were never meant to advance a political program—that she looked at contemporary events with the pure, disinterested eye of an artist. Subjected to on-camera interrogation by this film's director, Ray Müller, she sticks to that story. If you believe her, she's one kind of monster; if you don't, she's another. The juxtaposition of her grotesque apologia with clips from her grandiose, strikingly composed films makes for a bizarre and sobering spectacle. In German.—T.R. (3/28/94) (Film Forum.)

You So Crazy—Underneath his alarming confidence—what makes him so sure he can hold an audience in the sweaty palm of his hand?—Martin Lawrence is just a run-of-the-mill club comic, and his concert film is a wearying collection of routine routines. He uses gutter epithets to charge up commonplace attitudes. Lawrence is the comedian for those who are willing to settle for updated versions of old jokes about guys going out with the boys or expecting their gals to have dinner ready. There's no jazz scat to his scatology. And he raps out everything at the same emotional pitch, whether he's praising his mother's strength or riffing on yeast infections. Directed by Thomas Schlamme.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Embassy.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Humoresque (1946)—In this second version of Fannie Hurst's hokey weeper, the heroine (Joan Crawford) is myopic, dipsomaniacal, dissatisfied with her husband (Paul Cavanagh), older than her ghetto-born violinist lover (John Garfield), and given to brooding heavily about the futility of a life devoid of everything but sables, limousines, Napoleon brandy, town houses, seashore estates, and enough liquid assets to make a Morgan partner's eyes widen. She bears her burdens gallantly, and when she realizes that her career as a social butterfly has not prepared her adequately to be the helpmate of her violinist she bravely wades out into the ocean and gurgles to her doom, wreathed in seaweed and clamshells. (The music that accompanies her demise is the "Liebestod" from "Tristan und Isolde.") Clifford Odets worked on the update, and some of the dialogue is sharp-witted, but with frequent interruptions for big yeasty passages on the meaning of life and art. Garfield saws away impressively while Isaac Stern is heard playing several violin concertos, and there are lines to treasure, such as Cavanagh's remark about the music: "It has fire—rather like what you'd feel in a van Gogh painting." Jean Negulesco directed. (Possibly Odets was called in because he'd used a violinist hero in his 1937 play "Golden Boy.") As the hero's old neighborhood pal, Oscar Levant plays the piano and makes jokes; with J. Carrol Naish, Craig Stevens, Ruth Nelson, John Abbott, Fritz Leiber, and Robert (then Bobby) Blake.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 8.)

The Innocents (1961)—Directed by Jack Clayton and photographed by Freddie Francis (in CinemaScope, in black-and-white), this version of Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw" is one of the most elegantly beautiful ghost movies ever made. It features a scary, intense performance by Deborah Kerr, as the governess who sees demonic spectres and forces one of her two charges—the little boy Miles (Martin Stephens)—to confront them. Both Kerr and Michael Redgrave, as the gentleman who hires her, have just the right note of suppressed hysteria in their voices. The settings—the house, the park, the lake—are magnificent, and the script, by William Archibald, Truman Capote, and John Mortimer, offers the pleasures of literacy. The filmmakers concentrate on the virtuoso possibilities in the material, and the beauty of the images raises our terror to a higher plane than the simple fears of most ghost stories. There are great sequences (like the one in a schoolroom) that work on the viewer's imagination and remain teasingly ambiguous. With Pamela Franklin, Megs Jenkins, Peter Wyngarde, and Clytie Jessop. Music by Georges Auric.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 5.)

The Lady from Shanghai (1948)—Orson Welles' lead performance undermines his writing and directing in this glittering film noir; his features lapse into a hard-guy pout and he spouts an unbelievable brogue as an idealized tough Irishman. But Everett Sloane is an entertainingly outré villain—a two-legged tarantula on crutches—and there are several bold, flashy set pieces in San Francisco, including a chase through a Chinatown theatre, a love scene at the aquarium in Golden Gate Park, and a fun-house shoot-out (quoted recently at the climax of Woody Allen's "Manhattan Murder Mystery"). In the title role, Rita Hayworth, her hair colored platinum, has both bathing-beauty allure and an exciting sadistic streak—there's a stiletto hidden in the cheesecake.—M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 8.)

Torch Song (1953)—The viewer is asked to admire Joan Crawford's legs and her acting, which consists of pushing her mouth into positions meant to suggest suffering. The first is easy; the second impossible. In this misbegotten melodrama with some musical numbers, she finally settles for a blind musician (Michael Wilding). Which, all things considered, is a remarkably sensible decision. With Gig Young, Marjorie Rambeau, and Eugene Loring. Directed by Charles Walters.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 7.)

Zero for Conduct (1933)—School as seen through the eyes of children. Jean Vigo's forty-four-minute comedy-fantasy about a schoolchildren's revolt is one of the most poetic films ever made and one of the most influential, both in theme (as in Truffaut's "The 400 Blows" and Lindsay Anderson's "If . . .") and in its leaping continuity (as in Godard's "Breathless"). Vigo, himself, was clearly influenced by Abel Gance's pillow-fight sequence in "Napoléon." In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; May 7.)

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE STERN GANG

On Saturday, April 23rd, at the Libertarian Party Convention called to nominate a candidate for governor of New York, it was pretty easy to tell the old Party faithful from the fans of Howard Stern.

Howard Stern Fans: Any man yelling "Show us your tits!" when a woman walked by.

Any woman who complied.

Any woman, complying or not, in a thong bikini.

Anybody drinking beer at 10 A.M.

Party Faithful: Anybody wearing a suit and tie.

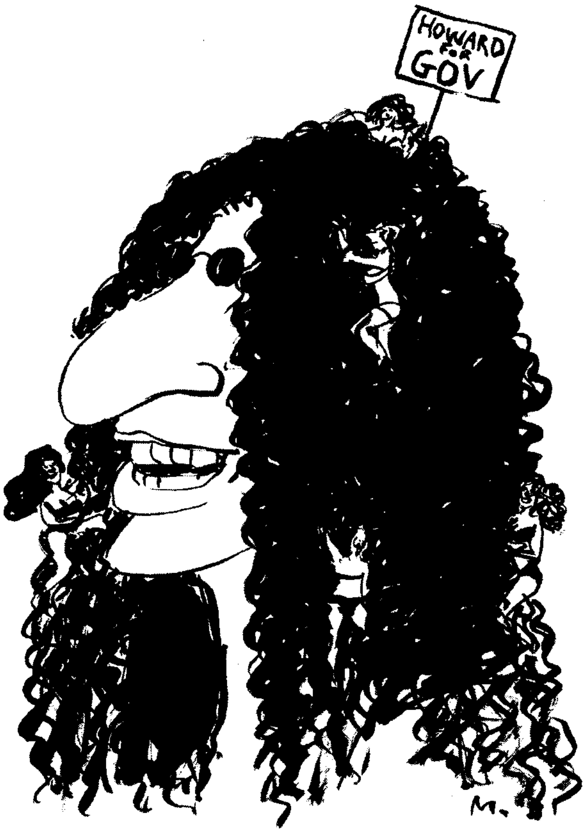
Anybody who looked angry.

Actually, not all the long-standing Libertarians on hand for the Convention, which was held at the Italian-American Community Center, on the outskirts of Albany, were angry. Some seemed thrilled that their previously obscure party was—for a moment, at least—not all that obscure. There were TV crews! There were newspaper reporters! Howard Stern himself, surrounded by TV crews and newspaper reporters, said, "Look at all the media I brought you!"

Membership was up, too. Until six weeks ago, when Mr. Stern began urging those listening to his talk-radio show to register as Libertarians so that they could attend the Convention and provide him with the necessary votes to win the gubernatorial nomination, the statewide Party membership stood at about three hundred. Suddenly—like that—it shot up to nearly seven hundred.

Most important to the long-standing Libertarians who were not angry was the fact that, if Mr. Stern carried the Convention, and if his fans then managed to gather fifteen thousand signatures statewide and thus assure Mr. Stern a place on the ballot in November, and if he then got at least fifty thousand votes, the Party would automatically have its own line on every statewide ballot for the next four years.

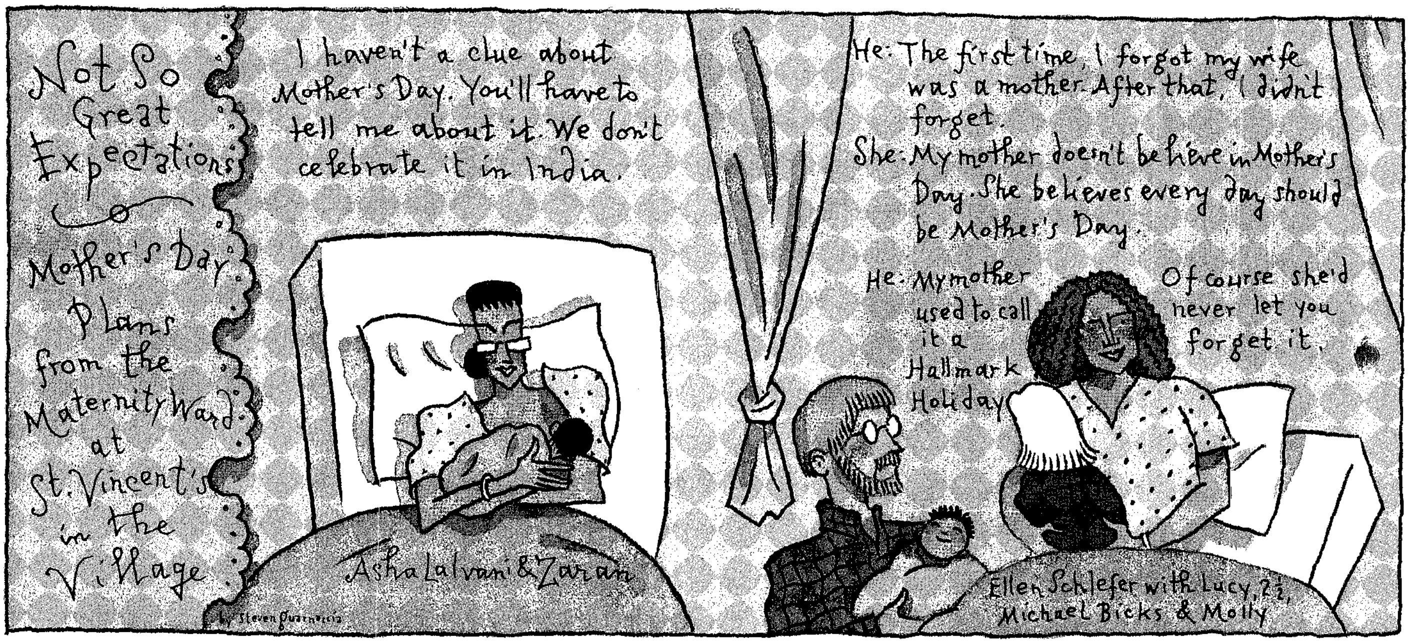
Even those not-angry Party faithful had to ask themselves some hard questions, though. Could they welcome to their ranks people like the guy who seconded Mr. Stern's nomination by declaring, "Vote for Howard Stern or I'll put my foot up your butt"? Could they entrust Libertarianism to a candidate who asked that a question addressed to him be rephrased so that "a moron can answer it"? Could they build a following with a candidate whose platform consisted of three, and only three, planks—fill all potholes now, bring back the death penalty, and find a way to collect tolls without causing traffic backups?



There were those among the Party faithful who, in their hearts and minds, angrily answered "No! No! No!" to such questions, and on the Convention floor they devised a strategy: Mr. Stern might carry this day, but he would carry it *slowly*. They would see to it that the nominating business dragged on right up until four o'clock, when the hall had to be cleared for an evening wedding banquet. One long-standing Libertarian seeking the nomination, a Buffalo lawyer named Jim Ostrowski, gave a speech that took up each of the twelve minutes allotted it, thanks to allusions to Thomas More, Jonathan Swift, and Karl Hess. And when he'd had it with a Stern fan in black leather who repeatedly leaped from his seat and tapped his watch theatrically during the speech, Mr. Ostrowski shouted, "I'll see you in the parking lot later, bub!" (The Stern fans liked that.)

The angry Party faithful also insisted that the Convention adhere to tradition and nominate by paper ballot. It took two hours for

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD


Not So Great Expectations
Mother's Day Plans from the Maternity Ward at St. Vincent's in the Village
I haven't a clue about Mother's Day. You'll have to tell me about it. We don't celebrate it in India.
Asha Lalvani & Zaran
He: The first time, I forgot my wife was a mother. After that, I didn't forget.
She: My mother doesn't believe in Mother's Day. She believes every day should be Mother's Day.
He: My mother used to call it a Hallmark Holiday
Of course she'd never let you forget it.
Ellen Schlefer with Lucy, 2½, Michael Bicks & Molly
by Steven Guarnaccia

the Libertarians to line up and cast their votes. The Stern fans, when they weren't voting, went out into the parking lot and did the kind of stuff that Stern fans do. The Party faithful remained inside and ate sandwiches.

After the ballots were tallied, it was announced that Mr. Stern had won two hundred and eighty-seven votes and his closest competitor, Mr. Ostrowski, had won thirty-four. The hall broke into wild applause. (One could only conclude that a lot of those among the Party faithful who had seemed angry weren't so angry after all.) Two young women jumped on the dais, shimmied out of their dresses, and danced. Above the pandemonium, the state chairman of the Party, Ludwig Vogel, could just barely be heard yelling into a microphone, "This is not growth, this is revolution!"

A COUPLE OF LESBIANS, SITTING AROUND TALKING (MOSTLY ABOUT THEIR FILM)

SUNDAY night is girls' night out at Café Tabac, in the East Village, and late one recent Sunday night Rose Troche and Guinevere Turner were definitely out. Ms. Troche and Ms. Turner are both in their twenties, are close friends, and are about to be famous, at least in certain circles, because "Go Fish"—a movie that they wrote and produced together, and that Ms. Troche directed and Ms. Turner stars in, and that, having been a hit at the Sundance Film Festival, will have its New York première next week on the opening night of the 1994 New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival—is, at least in certain circles, going to be big.

Ms. Troche and Ms. Turner are already famous among the people who know that Sunday night is girls' night out at Café Tabac. Every woman in the darkened second-floor dining room seemed to know them, or maybe it was that Ms. Troche and Ms. Turner, seated at a candlelit table in the middle of the room, were eying every second woman who walked past. Ms. Troche—soft-faced, never mind the two silver hoops in her left eyebrow—was drinking Scotch and smoking Rothmans and saying how at Café Tabac on Sunday nights "you don't have to look straight or act straight." (She went so far as to sing the theme from "Cheers": "Sometimes you wanna go where everybody knows your name.") Ms. Turner—long red hair, great cheekbones—was drinking Merlot and hand-rolling Drums and saying things like "Hey, girl, looking cute tonight."

"Go Fish" is an eighty-five-minute-long, black-and-white, resolutely cheerful film. The characters' apartments are spacious, and the lives they lead are, for the most part, sunny. As we sat with Ms. Troche and Ms. Turner, getting their attention now and then, we had to ask, "Do your lives look like the movie?"

"It's sweeter and happier than our lives," Ms. Turner said.

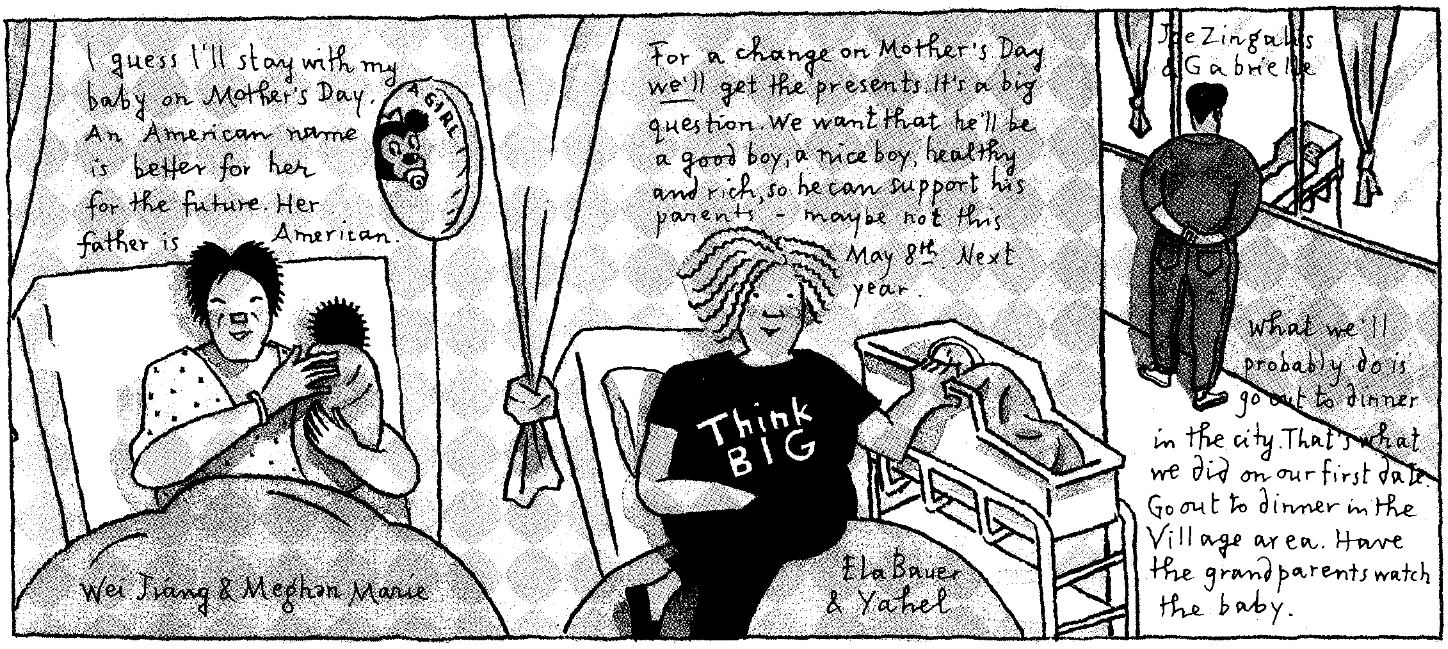
"Yeah," Ms. Troche said. "We're much darker women. Our personal lives are much more twisted." She laughed and began pointing to women around the room. "It's like, 'You slept with her, her, and her.' " We got the feeling she wasn't pointing randomly.

"Go Fish" is not a coming-out movie. It's a we're-*so*-out-we-have-all-the-problems-everybody-else-has movie. The plot of "Go Fish" revolves around Max (played by Ms. Turner), who describes herself in the film as a "carefree single lesbo, lookin' for love." Her matchmaking friends are bent on hooking her up with a mopey hippie named Ely who hasn't had much sex lately. There is sex in the movie, but it's not a movie about sex. The women in the film mostly go to the movies, throw dinner parties, fret over their clothes, and worry about finding Ms. Right.

"The women in our film are pretty vanilla," Ms. Troche said. "No dildos, no sex games."

"It's a movie about getting together," Ms. Turner said.

Ms. Troche and Ms. Turner ordered more drinks and smoked more cigarettes. As it got later, the room increas-


I guess I'll stay with my baby on Mother's Day. An American name is better for her for the future. Her father is American.
A GIRL
Wei Jiang & Meghan Marie
For a change on Mother's Day we'll get the presents. It's a big question. We want that he'll be a good boy, a nice boy, healthy and rich, so he can support his parents - maybe not this May 8th. Next year.
Think BIG
Ela Bauer & Yahel
Joe Zingalis & Gabrielle
What we'll probably do is go out to dinner in the city. That's what we did on our first date. Go out to dinner in the Village area. Have the grandparents watch the baby.

ingly took on a languorous sort of glamour—a forties-movie sort of glamour. Ms. Turner did a lot of flirting, and she was really good at it: lowering her eyes as a woman passed, then cocking her head just so and glancing up, her expression all innocence.

"Our sexuality is far more up front than that of the older generation of lesbians," Ms. Turner remarked at one point, not taking her eyes off the women coming and going: black, white, Asian, Hispanic; skirts, dresses, chiffon pants.

"We're in this fifteen-to-thirty-five age group, clamoring for love, sex, and friendship," Ms. Troche said.

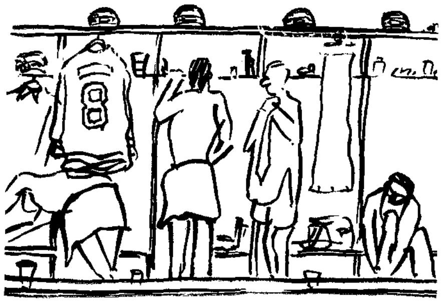
"Go Fish" begins its commercial run in New York next month. Ms. Troche is confident that the film can cross over and attract a straight audience. Ms. Turner is not so sure. Her uncertainty, she says, has to do with a lot of the jokes, which she sees as lesbian in-jokes—ones about female anatomy and about how lesbians never break up. And then there's the scene in which Max comments on the ragged state of Ely's fingernails. "The average person doesn't get that," Ms. Turner said. "Lesbians use their hands a lot, so bad fingernails—that's a really terrible thing."

ICED

WE expected to find a raucous celebration in the visitors' locker room at the Nassau Coliseum last week after the Rangers did away with the rival Islanders, but our expectations were checked—no champagne hosings, no boom-box victory anthems, no phony high fives for the equipment manager (that is, for the cameras). The Rangers are known to fans as the National Hockey League's most businesslike team, so perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised to find that they go about a postgame session, too, in businesslike fashion. And, of course, with so many games still to play if they are to be this year's champions, they're wise to remain businesslike—or "focussed," as the sportscasters say (and say). What noise there was came largely from the reporters, of whom there were many, the beat guys having been joined by other writers and TV correspondents, who were working one story only: Will the Rangers Finally Win the Stanley Cup? (In case you have never set foot in a New York bar between October and April, or are just getting around to hockey, the Rangers last won the Cup in 1940.) The players stood patiently amid the tape and the stockings that littered the carpeted floor, and tried to look interested when the less seasoned members of the press asked questions like "How did you feel when you scored that goal?" From time to time, one Ranger would catch another's eye and, if both happened to be Canadian, which many of the Rangers are, they'd offer a serene "Good game, eh?"

Maybe it's that they don't make all the money that baseballers and basketballers do, or maybe it's the Canadian thing, but hockey players are among the most gracious and unassuming professional athletes we know of. Having watched these Rangers slam Islanders into fibreglass walls all evening long, we found the low-keyness approaching the surreal at times—for instance, when we noticed several of them snacking on juice and bran muffins. It was reassuring when, from the showers, we heard a towel snap. (But there was no cursing in response.) And there was the occasional recounting of the evening's lone on-the-ice fight of sorts—the pair of roundhouse rights that the Islanders' Mick Vukota applied to the Rangers' defenseman Jay Wells.

As the media people left to meet their deadlines, players gelled their hair and knotted ties at a row of four sinks. Two small red-headed boys squeezed into the stall occupied by their father, left wing Greg Gilbert. Eventually, the players filed out, walking slowly and quietly toward the team bus. A number of them were in tailored suits, and—it came as no surprise to us—a number of them were limping. ♦



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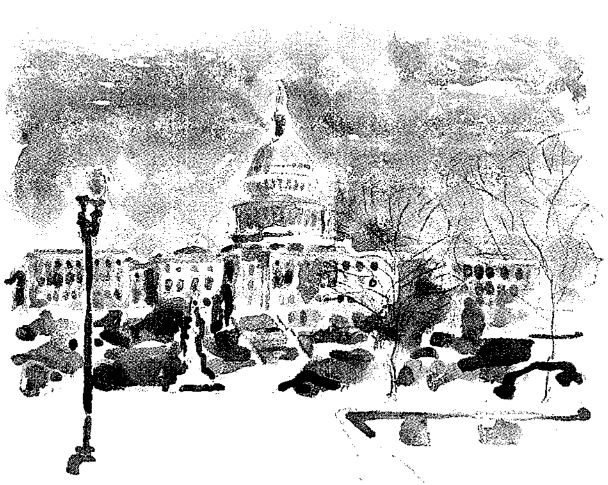
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

CRIME PAYS

The G.O.P. has always used crime as a weapon against liberals, but congressional Democrats are finding ways to steal the issue back.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

SUDDENLY, a cowering Everyman was being clobbered by a bully wielding a baseball bat. "Today," came the deep voice-over, "fourteen people will be murdered." Cut to a woman, hiding her face and sobbing. "Forty-eight women will be raped." Cut to an old woman standing helpless as a thug snatches her purse. "And five hundred seventy-eight people will be robbed." A gallery of rogues—many with scraggly beards, all with their eyes blacked out—flashes past. "Why?" The camera freezes on a smiling middle-aged man with thinning hair combed straight back, the Platonic form of a slightly fussy high-school social-studies teacher. The voice intones, "Criminals have a friend in Congress named *Charles Schumer*." In block letters, over his head: "WHY?" And, next to his face, "48 RAPED." Again the voice: "Stop Schumer. Call your congressman now. Tell him you want Schumer to build prisons, not build friendships with criminals."



MARIO MICOSSI

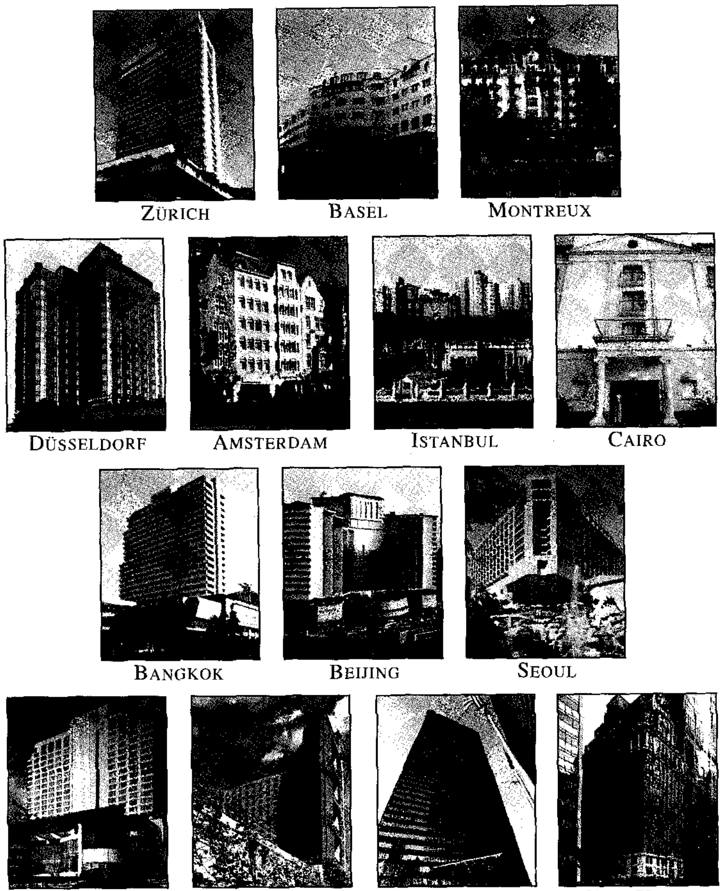
This sixty-second ad was produced by CrimeStrike, an operation of the National Rifle Association. But CNN, the only broadcaster the N.R.A. took it to, refused to air it. So the N.R.A. bought a full-page ad in *USA Today*, with a headline over a picture of Schumer reading, "HOW TO DEFEAT THE CRIMINAL'S BEST FRIEND IN CONGRESS." The N.R.A. has painted this target on Schumer's face because he is the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice, which is responsible for drafting a crime bill that passed the House on April 21st by a resounding vote of two hundred and eighty-five to a hundred and forty-one. In conference with the Senate, which passed its version of the bill back on November 19th, Schumer will be one of the House's main negotiators. What has angered the N.R.A., and most of the Republican Party (for which the N.R.A. often rides shotgun), is not simply the provisions of the proposed bill. It is the fact that the law-and-order issue, which Republicans have used for a generation to kneecap Democrats at will, seems—for the moment, at least—to have been coopted. It may even be in the process of being turned against them. In December, 1991, on the eve of the last Presidential campaign, the Republicans held more than a two-to-one advantage on the issue—thirty-seven to sixteen per cent, according to a *Time*/CNN poll. Just a month ago, according to a CNN/*USA Today* poll, the Democrats held the edge, by forty-two to thirty-four per cent. "The Republicans lost Communism and they're losing crime," a White House aide gloated.

Schumer, far from feeling like cornered prey, overwhelmed by the paralyzing fear that has often stricken Democrats in the past, is almost euphoric in his enthusiasm for the hunt. "About ten members came to me on the floor and asked, 'How do we get ads like this?' I was on 'Crossfire' debating Wayne LaPierre"—the N.R.A.'s executive vice-president—"and he said during the commercial break, 'Damn it, I told them not to do it.' "

Charles Schumer, forty-three years old, of Brooklyn, and Harvard (College and Law School), and of the New York State Assembly, is a talker of the first rank. He broke his arm a month ago in the icy parking lot of a church, so he gesticulates with the arm that is not bound and by bobbing his head. His mind works with astonishing rapidity, and, what is even more astonishing, his voice keeps pace—faster and faster, more and more excited. Tick, talk, tick, talk. Just when it seems that he will be carried away by gales of his own rhetoric, he grounds himself in an apt detail, then spins it verbally until it is completely smooth. "When I'd just become head of the crime committee, I went to something called the National Development and Research Institute, but I always get the name wrong." He's warming up. "It's in New York, on Beach Street, down by Tribeca. They were being funded federally, and no one looked at their research. They studied three prisons where they did mandatory drug treatment. What is mandatory drug treatment?" He's warm. "Blumenthal is convicted of armed robbery, say, given a ten-year sentence, but after six years, 'Blumenthal,' they say, 'if you go down to Stay'n Out, which is at the Arthur Kill facility out on Staten Island, and you go through therapeutic drug treatment, and you stay clean, you're out after a few years.' The remarkable thing is, they studied these guys for three to nine years after they got out, and seventy-seven per cent didn't commit a crime. Phenomenal! The cost is less than three thousand dollars a year per inmate."

Don't get him started. His expertise on any number of subjects is fearsome. His energy not only doesn't flag but gains velocity at a point where others' blood sugar begins to run low. He is more than a little immodest, yet his instinct to deal compels him to suppress his arrogance when it threatens to undermine him. He is the opposite of a loner, but he's not just a schmoozer: at any given moment, he's seeking the advice and opinions of his colleagues about some bill. He loves being in the fray, a tummler of the House. "I go a little crazy, but I think this crime bill could be historic."

He has been mugged, and has found his car vandalized—"four times in four months, and for several months what I would do when I woke up was put my



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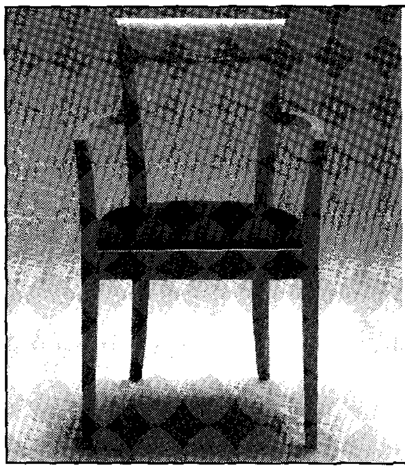

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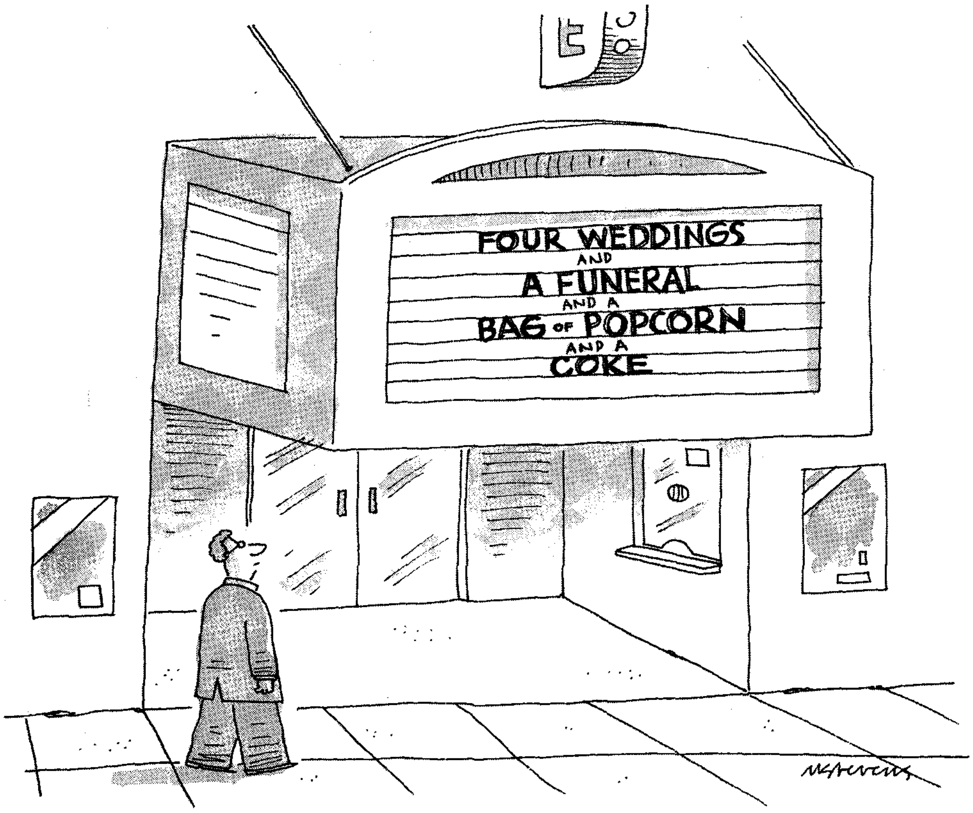

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jeans over my pajamas and run downstairs to see if my car was still there." A liberal mugged by reality, he wants to make liberalism work. "See," Schumer told me, "the crime issue is government's greatest failure. You want to know why all those people out there hate government? The classic case where we should be making people's lives better is crime! If those bozos can't even do that, what good are they? And, conversely, if we should start doing that, it would be a whole turnaround. All this stuff, well, you know, about 'the liberals'—this burns me! They *want* a lot of criminals. The Republican Party only succeeds when the race issue is the divide. Every time they try to win, it's on race. When they try to win on non-race—abortion, gays—they lose. That's why they're going to crime and illegal immigrants. That's when they win. They know it."

A fellow-representative says of Schumer, "If you have a liberal Jew from Brooklyn who's for the death penalty, you can't touch him." Schumer's position is such that he is able to plead with every faction of the party and be taken seriously. Because crime control is essentially a state and local responsibility, the actual effect of federal crime programs is necessarily marginal; but the margins are not minor, especially in their political symbolism.

The grappling over the crime bill is an intense fight that involves partisan repositioning over the most emotional issue in American life. It has fundamentally defined the parties since Goldwater ran for President on a law-and-order platform in 1964, and it is now redefining them. On April 6th, Representative F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., a Republican from Wisconsin and a member of the House Judiciary Committee, sent his G.O.P. colleagues a straightforward letter making plain the sense of loss: "If we work together we can defeat this bill and craft a real crime bill that will give the crime issue back to Republicans for the upcoming elections."

Representative Barney Frank, a liberal from Massachusetts and a member of the Judiciary Committee, says, "There is an important political imperative: for the Republicans not to be able to accuse the Democrats of being soft on crime. Period. We have a dilemma—division within the Party. We have to continue educating our left not to be vulnerable. Schumer comes across with a good package. He gets a little emotional at times, but he understands the imperative to keep it balanced. It leaves the Republicans totally desperate. They're trying to make the crime bill worse to have it defeated."

From the election of Richard Nixon through the election of George Bush, the Republicans held a strategic advantage on crime which was the domestic political equivalent of their advantage in foreign policy. Crime, as Bush's handler, Lee Atwater, put it, was a "wedge issue"—to be driven into the Democratic Party in order to fragment it. The apotheosis of the issue for the Republicans came in 1988 with the demonization of Michael Dukakis as "an A.C.L.U. liberal." Four years later, Bill Clinton ran on a program calling for the deployment of a hundred thousand new cops on the beat and as a governor who had applied the death penalty. He combined this with an advocacy of gun control and a host of prevention and treatment programs.

The Republicans have been aware for some time of the political threat to their control of the crime issue. In 1991, Republicans in the Senate filibustered to block a Democratic-sponsored crime bill that contained increased punishments, including the death penalty, and additional funding for state and local police. They wanted no bill whatsoever that bore a Democratic imprint; they succeeded in killing it.

The election of Bill Clinton altered the equation. But he must hold together a party in which blacks, civil libertarians, urban ethnics, and Southern and Western gun enthusiasts start nervously flying apart at the slightest provocation. In the Senate, he relies on Joseph Biden, chairman of the Judiciary Committee; in the House, on Charles Schumer. Like Clinton and Biden, Schumer has come to believe in a synthesis of punishment and prevention—"my little mantra," he said. His bill mixes disparate elements. Alongside the expansion of the death penalty and funding for new prisons are alternatives to incarceration for youthful offenders; employment and education programs; programs to prevent domestic violence against women; community policing; registration of child abusers; and a ban on hand-gun sales to juveniles.

When the Senate passed its twenty-two-billion-dollar bill, in November, it was in the aftermath of Democratic defeats in Los Angeles and New York City—cities where the Democratic candidates conceded the crime issue as though their abdication were the moral high ground. Biden professed a desire to recast in conference the bill's unduly broad "three strikes and you're out" life sentencing. The Administration, divided and unfocussed, dithered during the Senate debate. Attorney General Janet Reno disagreed with the President on many aspects of the bill, and the White House mounted no political operation on its behalf.

Schumer, knowing that his task was more daunting than the one on the Senate side, prevailed upon the Administration to use its resources to help him thread the needle in the House. For every gesture in one direction, Schumer made one in another. In each case, he cut a deal on a particular question to gain support for the whole. The death penalty was expanded dramatically, but mandatory minimum sentences for first-time nonviolent drug offenders were reduced. In a speech at the Whip meeting, Schumer pleaded for support for the Racial Justice Act provision of the bill—which would allow defendants to present evidence of patterns of racial discrimination in the application of the death penalty. Moderates and Southerners agreed when Schumer persuaded the Black Caucus to give up on retroactivity. Still, it passed only by a whisker. In the final tally, the House voted for three times as much funding as the Senate for prevention programs, such as mandatory drug treatment, and half as much for punishment. The Senate, though, voted for a hundred thousand cops on the beat instead of the House's fifty thousand, and included an assault-weapons ban.

In the House, Schumer sponsored a separate bill banning assault weapons, because he knew that including the ban in the crime bill would imperil its passage—Representative Jack Brooks, the Texas Democrat who chairs the Judiciary Committee, is against it. Schumer held new hearings on the ban, waving a gun at a stunned N.R.A. lobbyist he had called as a witness. The margin either way is believed to be extremely narrow. All this will affect the politics of the conference committee and the final vote.The Republican opponents have reflexively turned to well-worn themes. "It is a weak crime bill," Representative Bill McCollum, a Republican from Florida, said, and he raised the shadow of racial "quotas" over the Racial Justice Act. Sensenbrenner ridiculed graffiti-prevention programs and midnight-basketball leagues. Newt Gingrich, the Minority Whip, assailed those who live in "downtown New York City" as lacking the common sense of those who live in "the rest of America."

On the day of the House vote on the crime bill, Schumer and I were having breakfast in the Members' Dining Room. At the next table, symmetrically, sat Gingrich and the conservative columnist Robert Novak. Even though the conference committee and further delicate coalition building lay ahead of Schumer, he indulged himself. Stop Schumer? Unlikely. "They're *flailing*," Schumer said in a stage whisper. "They don't know *where* to go. If we keep this up, the Republicans' Number One issue against us is gone. They don't have it. They've lost it. That's why they did everything they could to stop this bill. And *this* man *here*"—he gestured toward the silver-maned future House Minority Leader—"knows it." ♦

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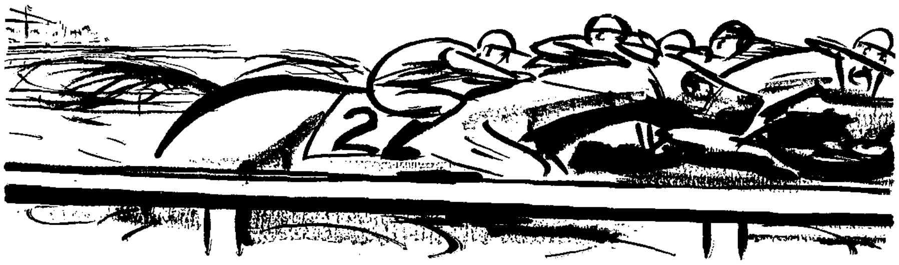
LETTER FROM KENTUCKY

DOING THE BOPTROT

Kentucky has always enjoyed gambling on horses and politics, but an F.B.I. sting called BOPTROT *has raised the stakes considerably.*

BY BOBBIE ANN MASON



ARTHUR GETZ

It's Derby time—Kentucky's proudest day. But the run for the roses is not the only thing on Kentuckians' minds lately. The F.B.I. is here, investigating corruption in state government, and several of our politicians have been convicted of taking bribes to influence racing legislation. Not long ago, one state senator was convicted of lying to the F.B.I. but refused to resign until he was sent to jail in chains. And recently the subject of gambling casinos has come up, adding more clouds of dust in our skies. Casinos are erupting like boils in a number of states, and Kentucky's horse-racing tracks, which take in over half a billion dollars a year in wagers, are worried that gamblers will take their cash to the gaming tables out of state instead of to the tracks here. Churchill Downs and some of the other tracks wanted to meet the threat by building casinos as add-ons to their grandstands. But they weren't able to get casino gambling legalized this year, because the shadows cast by the F.B.I. have made the word "casino" as appealing to a lot of people here as, say, the words "toxic-waste dump." Polls show we don't really want casinos in our neighborhoods anyway, but, because casinos are being touted as the newest therapy for the nation's economic ills, I suspect that the issue won't go away.

Kentucky is a poor state emerging from a rural past and eying an urban, technological future with some caution. In 1995, floating casinos from Indiana are due to arrive on the Ohio River—on our very border. Glitzy casinos in places like Biloxi, New Orleans, and Iowa have got off to a running start. Casinos with theme parks are being promoted as family-entertainment centers in Las Vegas. In the next few years, as the national mythology about getting rich shifts from Horatio Alger to Ed McMahon, Kentucky will have to wrestle with its soul on the matter. Missouri has just had second thoughts about its legalization of casinos, and has decided that slot machines don't belong on its riverboats; blackjack and poker are O.K., though, apparently because they are games of skill, not chance. That seems a fine distinction, but perhaps one we can appreciate here. As a border state, Kentucky has a kind of Janus-faced sense of direction. The motto on the state seal is "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." The climate is both Northern and Southern, sometimes on the same day. I've noticed that Kentuckians are generally conservative and skeptical of change until it is all the rage everywhere else. We always seem to be teetering between tradition and inevitability. If casinos, like superhighways and television, are inevitable in America, would Kentucky benefit by holding out against this tide? On the other hand, how can Kentucky take a purist position when its specialties are its "sin" industries—tobacco, whiskey, betting on horses, and, unofficially, marijuana?

We've always been gamblers, I guess. For the most part, Kentucky is a strait-laced, heartland-American state—churchgoing and family-centered. The crime rate is low. But we've always had a little touch of the devil in us—betting on horses, distilling bourbon. The pioneers settled arguments by having horse races, and horses were racing down the streets of Lexington as soon as the stumps got cleared out, back in the seventeen-eighties.

But we seem not to be ready for casinos. This winter, the legislature held hearings to find out whether casinos in Kentucky made sense, and whether they should be at racetracks exclusively, and what this would mean to church bingo, and whether a constitutional amendment to legalize casinos should be offered to voters. It seemed a spectacular case of bad timing for the coalition of tracks and horsemen to bring its plea to the General Assembly so soon after the F.B.I. probe—code-named BOPTROT—surfaced. Few lawmakers were in a mood to take the idea of casinos seriously.

Operation BOPTROT began in 1990, as an undercover investigation of the Kentucky legislature. For a year and a half, the F.B.I. was creeping around Frankfort, the state capital, secretly doctoring twenty-dollar bills with fluorescent powder and taping lawmakers and lobbyists, and even having surveillance airplanes fly over. Nobody suspected a thing. Similar sting operations have gone on in California, Arizona, and South Carolina. Here the F.B.I. targeted lawmakers who were willing to be bribed for their influence in helping a troubled harness track compete against a rival Thoroughbred track for more gambling opportunities. The BOP in BOPTROT came from the Business Organizations and Professions Committees in both the House and the Senate of the Kentucky General Assembly; the BOP Committees handle horse-racing bills. TROT referred to the trots, as harness racing is known. The investigation spread to other areas of public business and is still going on—right now it is nosing into banking legislation passed in 1984 that benefitted Wallace Wilkinson, who became governor a few years later. To date, eighteen defendants have been convicted of or have pleaded guilty to at least one felony apiece.

The F.B.I. conducted a classic sting, taking advantage of several events likely to flush out wrongdoers, including a junket to Las Vegas for the Jockeys' Guild convention (showgirls, gambling). Then, on March 31, 1992, about thirty F.B.I. agents came out of nowhere and swooped through Frankfort, scattering subpoenas and striking terror into the hearts of the lawmakers. They cornered the Speaker of the House, Donald J. Blandford, in the State Capitol Building, and played tapes for him that showed that he had taken money from his best friend, Bill McBee, a harness-track lobbyist who had until recently been the head of the House BOP Committee but had lost reëlection. One of the payments was made during a luxury boat trip off Fort Lauderdale. Blandford admitted taking a free trip to Florida with his secretary-girlfriend, Barbara Wunderlich, but said he didn't recall which lobbyist paid for the Florida frolic. At his trial last year, Blandford described how lobbyists routinely bought him meals and drinks, and said he never thought it was a problem. Although he denied that the money he took was a bribe, the most enduring image of BOPTROT in the public mind is of Blandford, in a Frankfort hotel suite, saying "Bless your heart" as McBee gives him five hundred dollars from the harness-racing people. McBee says, "I share with my buddies." It's all on the videotape.

THE Boptrotters made plenty of excuses for their behavior. Some of them still say that they didn't see anything wrong with taking favors—that it's an ordinary, friendly way of doing business. Maybe they felt they were helping out their friends in tough times. This is all fairly small-time stuff, as scandals these days go, but the complexities of politics and history are swirling around our heads here like one of those spring tornadoes that have been coming through lately. The investigation and the fallout from it seem to have been going on for ages, but more revelations are arriving all the time. BOPTROT has stood the state on its ear, and we're having to take a hard look at the way things get done here. We have a history of tolerating public corruption, and many Kentuckians believe that all politicians are crooked anyway. Somebody on a statewide radio call-in show said he thought BOP stood for "Bribe Our Politicians." Now the state auditor is having a field day investigating government waste and conflicts of interest.

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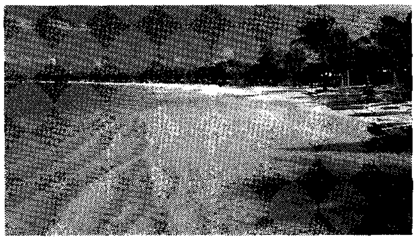

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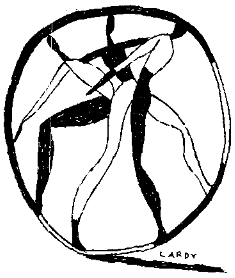
He says that engineering and architecture firms are sending an awful lot of free hams to state employees. Basketball tickets, too. In this age of intense scrutiny of politics, these many details of corruption are being unearthed like shards of pottery in an archeological dig. Somehow, if we get it all out in the open, will it all fit together and have a beautiful integrity of its own? Some folks here think that dragging it all out into the open is shameful and threatens our institutions; others say that the highest standards should prevail and that all these petty crimes reveal corruption of the deepest kind.



So, in this climate of self-consciousness, it seems weird that a group of lobbyists should have had the gall to try to convince the legislators this year that casinos would help the horse industry. The whole notion of a casino in Kentucky is so odd it strains the imagination. Picture a neon-barnacled Caesars Palace in a cornfield where a barn and silo used to be. Or Farmer Bob's Last Chance Casino. But then, malls now stand where buffalo once roamed. And when malls first appeared they were like the World's Fair. People with little cash in their pockets made long journeys just to see them.

Before I go any further down the road from BOPTROT to casinos, let me point out two important facts about Kentucky. First, in Kentucky we usually call our governors by their first name, and often a citizen can claim some kind of roundabout association that gives him a personal right to do this. For instance, I was a student at the University of Kentucky at the same time as our most recent governors, John Y. Brown, Martha Layne Collins, and Wallace Wilkinson, so I can recall the days when Martha Layne was a beauty queen and Wally started his bookstore. (He apparently saw that his fortune was to be made in books, not in studying, so he dropped out and proceeded to make his fortune. Then he bought banks.) I met John Y. once at the Derby. He was drinking a mint julep. I don't have any personal association with Brereton Jones, our current governor. He's a little remote. I imagine maybe the only way I'll get to meet Brereton is if his helicopter crashes into my yard. (He and the state chopper crashed into a tree two years ago.) Second, Kentucky has a hundred and twenty counties. People can place you and judge you by your county (and its basketball teams). We're familiar with the governors because they come and visit. When Martha Layne campaigned, she went to every single county in Kentucky. Each county has its own court system, and local ethics standards have no state guidelines. The counties have been called "little kingdoms."

Now, with those two points in mind, here's a simplified version of the background of BOPTROT.

Once upon a time, the governor had all the power. Lobbyists took their pleas straight to him. But by the time John Y. Brown was elected, in 1979, a shift in the power structure was under way. John Y. and his bride, the former Miss America and TV sports queen Phyllis George, brought an aura of glamour and mystery to the office. John Y., the Kentucky Fried Chicken king, was a businessman, not much interested in the good-old-boy way of getting things done. He was often out of the state, and he didn't even live in Frankfort, in the governor's manse. Confused, the lobbyists turned to the legislators. The legislature had already started to get out from under the governor's thumb and was acting on its own. But at the same time, the culture of corruption was growing, and a lot of the lawmakers proved vulnerable to some temptations that came their way. Lobbyists multiplied. They entertained lawmakers with receptions. There were wine-and-cheese receptions and—when something really important was at stake—shrimp receptions.

BOPTROT had a lot to do with free snacks. People here suspect that their legislators eat too many free jumbo shrimp. Kentucky is the nation's sixth-poorest state, and political corruption can therefore involve rather small amounts of money (a couple of the BOPTROT bribes taken by legislators were four hundred dollars) as well as free food. Food is a significant symbol in an agricultural state, where the memory of hard work in the fields is virtually genetic. If you don't have to grow it, hoe it, cook it, or pay for it, food can seem like a prize. It was a small step from letting a lobbyist pay for a meal to taking a couple of twenties from a lobbyist to pay for a meal, and another small step to pocketing a few dollars. Most of our lawmakers—part-time employees, who have other businesses back home—don't move in the mint-julep and silver-platters-of-canapés circles of central Kentucky. They're not highly paid for their time in Frankfort—a hundred dollars a day plus about seventy-five dollars for expenses, for only sixty days every two years. They're scattered around the state, and they're products of their regions. Some come from rural areas, some from counties where alcohol is illegal. Some may be more familiar with hunting and fishing than with the racetrack. So a pile of you-peel-'em shrimp or a free trip to Las Vegas to gamble and see barely dressed showgirls would seem like glamour.

Night life in Frankfort during the General Assembly shuttles between two places: a steak house called Flynn's and the Holiday Inn Capital Plaza—the Hotel, it's called, since most other lodgings are motels. It's a tall, modern outfit with a ballroom and a Sunday champagne brunch. In recent years, lobbyists rented suites and gave big dinner parties or receptions. One lobbyist had a condo there. There were crap games and card games. Legislative groupies hung around. For a time, a certain lobbyist kept a running tab at Flynn's for legislators who cared to use it. One regular at Flynn's who sometimes used the account was the tall, prepossessing Don Blandford—the distinguished Speaker of the House. Blandford was very popular. He held court at a round table at Flynn's. In his red Corvette, he'd go from reception to reception, performing the state's business all night. He was much admired by many for his strong leadership. Originally an unsophisticated union meatcutter from Daviess County, in the western part of the state, Blandford was a champion of the common man. He first ran for office on a dare. His friends still swear by his integrity, and he seems fully convinced that the money he took from his lobbyist friend was not a bribe.

If you've been in Frankfort on a Friday night looking for something to eat, you might not imagine that any night

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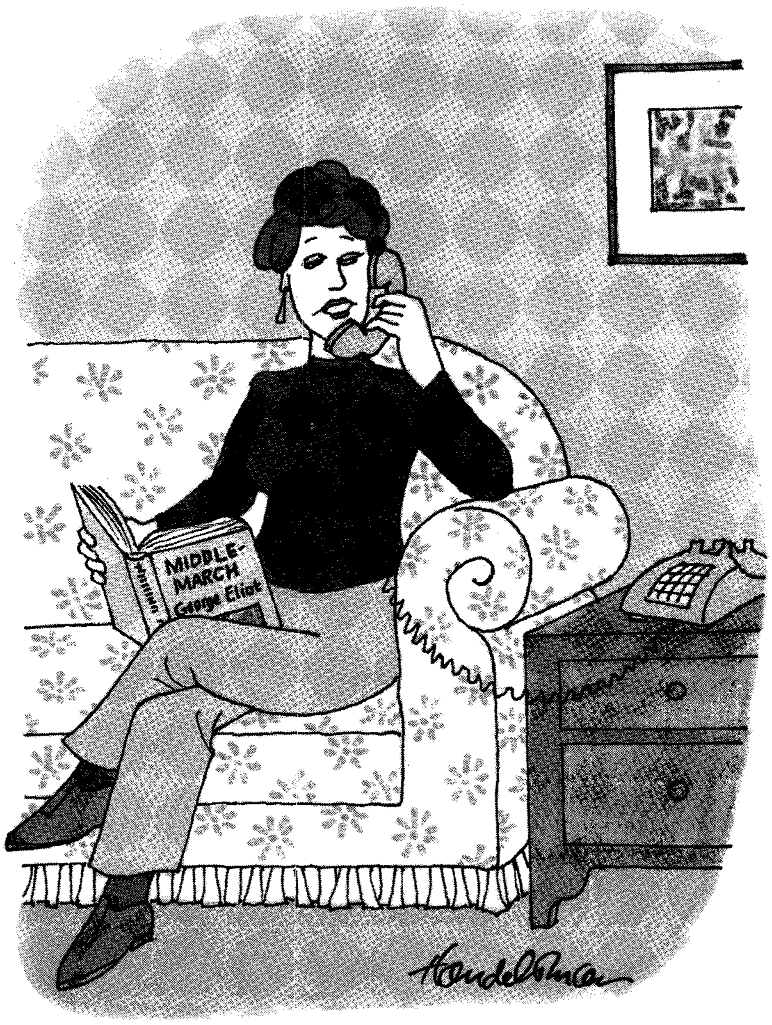
life ever goes on. It's a quiet town, not a jet-setters' mecca. There are a few shopping plazas, a deserted downtown, one tall government-office building, a small university, a few barbecue places. In a small shopping plaza just above the scenic overlook of Frankfort is Flynn's, a flat-roofed brick box. Inside, it's campy but homey. The walls are plastered with political memorabilia, including a bill signed by Don Blandford that proclaims Flynn's the official hangout of the General Assembly. A strip steak is $7.95 and the fried-jumbo-shrimp dinner is $8.95. Not far away, the domed Capitol, with a famous floral clock on the grounds, sits in a river valley rimmed by limestone cliffs. At the scenic overlook, you can gaze straight past the Capitol and across the valley to Frankfort Cemetery, where Daniel Boone is rolling in his grave.

Don Blandford's tumble was such a major event here that it got me thinking about Ed Prichard, from Bourbon County. Edward Fretwell Prichard, Jr., was a smart, Harvard-educated lawyer who rose to be a member of F.D.R.'s Brain Trust. He helped manage America's wartime economy. Katharine Graham, the longtime publisher of the Washington *Post*, once said, "When we were young, Prich was the most impressive young man of our generation, the one who dazzled us most." He returned to Kentucky at the end of the war with political ambitions, but before long he got caught committing vote fraud and went to jail. In later years, a repentant Prichard said, in an interview in the Boston *Globe*, "I was raised in a county where monkeying with elections was second nature; my father did it; my great-grandfather did it. . . . I was raised to believe that that was just second nature. There I was on the one hand with all those great moral and intellectual principles, believing I ought to stand for the good, the true and the beautiful; and on the other hand thinking it's perfectly all right to stuff a ballot box. Now that's an absolute absurdity." His chances for political office were ruined, but he became an important behind-the-scenes adviser to Kentucky governors through the sixties and seventies. He played a significant role in planning the future of Kentucky education, the outcome of which (after his death) was the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, or KERA—a plan that is in the vanguard of American education reform. This progressive revamping of our school system may be the most significant thing the state has tried to do in this century. Ever since I can remember, Kentucky and Arkansas were always near the bottom in education. Usually, we were just ahead of Arkansas. Kentuckians used to joke, "Thank God for Arkansas."

Unlike Prichard, Don Blandford, who has only a high-school education, is no genius, but he has been credited with pushing KERA through the legislature. When Blandford stood with his gavel during the KERA battles and banged the House to order, you could imagine him with his butcher knife behind the meat counter at the Kroger in Owensboro and think about how far he had come. Anyway, both Prichard and Blandford were heroes of KERA, and this is the kind of contradiction that makes things complicated for us here and makes it so sad to see Kentuckians trapped by the system they're trying to rise above. Sometimes we get stuck at the buffet table.

Kentucky's border-state personality goes back further than the Civil War, when our loyalties were divided—back to our frontier days. We seem to have inherited a belief that good and evil are interwoven, a recognition that God and the Devil form a necessary tension by which people live their lives. The great extremes of good and evil seem to be posted everywhere and they overlap in everyday ways. And when people try to separate them into absolutes they sta[illegible] sounding either ignorant or prissy. The hot debate going on over how KERA is turning out is just one reflection of Kentucky's divisions. Some people see Satanism and witchcraft in KERA. A newspaper columnist said that some people view it as a "warlock in the schools" program. "Self-esteem" and "multicultural curriculum" and "outcome-based education" are apparently new forms of Devil talk. KERA isn't the



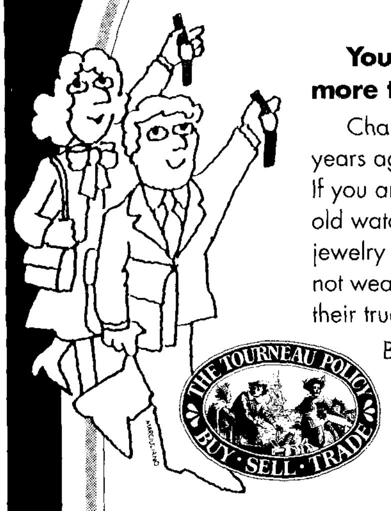
"Nothing much. Reading a book by some dead white female."

Devil, and it's not a panacea, either—we've got the lottery for that.

KERA doesn't offer instant gratification, whereas casinos might. But, of course, the legislators were scared to touch the casino issue this year. There didn't seem to be much night life going on at Flynn's or at the Hotel during the 1994 session. After BOPTROT surfaced, the hangdog lawmakers were compelled to pass a new ethics law. Don Blandford was by then in a comfortable federal prison, having pineapple juice at happy hour and reading law books to support his appeal. He says he's become an exercise addict. In this floundering during the era of ethics, the legislature seemed miffed that the party was over. They dawdled over public business. And the F.B.I. wasn't finished with them: just before the session ended, the Senate minority leader was indicted for being part of a conspiracy to commit extortion for his support of a 1984 banking bill.

WONDERING about the chastened atmosphere of the General Assembly, I went to Frankfort to see Jeff Green, the senator for the First District—six counties in western Kentucky, an area that includes my home town. I had met him last year at a Kiwanis pancake breakfast at my old high school, and now I wanted to ask how he was doing, since he was fairly new in the Senate—and, as of a year ago, was the new, straight-arrow chairman of the Senate BOP Committee, the "Big Bopper." We sat in his tiny Senate cubicle in the Capitol Annex. Tobacco smoke was in the air, because Kentucky is bucking the national trend against smoking. Green, who does not smoke, has a youthful and eager quality, which apparently impressed the Senate leadership. A few days after David LeMaster, who was convicted of lying to the F.B.I., resigned as chairman of the Senate BOP Committee, Green got a call from the Senate leadership asking him to come and talk to them.

"I didn't know if I was being taken to the woodshed, or what," he told me. "I went over, and they were all sitting there around an oak table. They said, 'We need to talk to you.'" They explained to Green that they needed someone to chair the Senate BOP Committee—someone new, who had integrity. "I was apprehensive, but took it on



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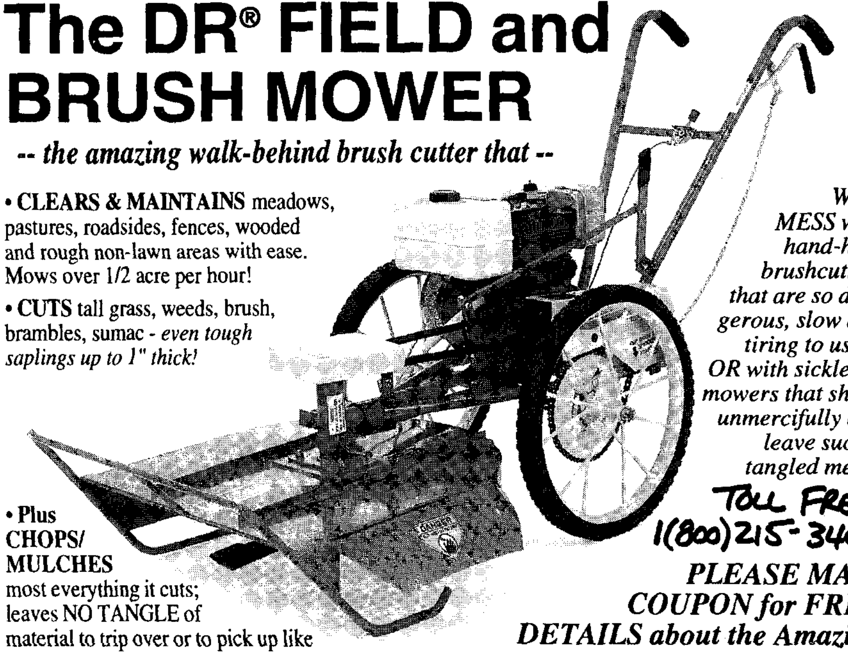

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the spot. It was a challenge." He didn't expect much that was controversial to come up. "But guess what was dumped on me our first meeting—casino gambling!"

Most folks back home in Green's district would no more vote for casino gambling than they would vote to legalize liquor. You can drive all the way from Graves County to Louisville, some two hundred miles, without passing through a county or a municipality where you can buy a drink. Like liquor stores and bars, casinos would be considered a blight on the community. Of course, many residents of Graves County gladly go to nearby Paducah, which has bars and liquor stores galore, as well as a racetrack whose owners would love to have a casino. Kentuckians also flock over to Metropolis, Illinois, to gamble aboard Merv Griffin's riverboat, as they call it. (He's a shareholder in Players International, which also owns the Paducah track.) My mother, a farmer, went with a senior-citizens' group on an outing on Merv's riverboat. She's not a gambler, so she just went along for the ride. But she complained that there was no place to sit, no windows, nothing to see. She was bored.

Yet many Kentuckians do love to gamble. We got the lottery in 1989, and there's talk of adding keno and video machines that would be quite similar to illegal gambling machines. Off-track betting is growing popular here, too. The bunch of racetracks that pushed to legalize casinos said they needed to offer Las Vegas-style gambling in order to survive. They presented a grand vision of entertainment complexes with casinos and hotels. They had charts and graphs and literature. They spent more than three hundred thousand dollars packaging and promoting their effort. Although they warned that Kentucky's economy would be sucked up by out-of-state riverboats, they couldn't find a sponsor for the bill. And when they offered to advance a hundred and fifty-one million dollars in tax revenue, lawmakers—weary of doing the BOPTROT—cringed. That sounded too much like a bribe. After the casino initiative flopped, the Assembly passed a bill to permit more televised racing from other states. Many horse breeders are saying that this will be the death of the old-fashioned, pretty racing that Kentucky is known for, but the tracks are glad for more races for people to bet on.

IT was time to seek the wisdom of Kentucky's revered historian laureate, Thomas Dionysius Clark, a native of Mississippi who has called Kentucky home for sixty-five years. I went to talk with him in Lexington, at the library of the University of Kentucky, where he still hangs out, long after retirement.

Clark is nearly ninety-one, but, although he is a bit stooped, he is agile and alert, full of good humor and energy. He drives his pickup truck down into the mountains frequently to tramp around in some woods he owns. He has a Deep South drawl that is not typical of flat-twanged Kentucky.

BOPTROT is nothing new, he told me right away. "It came out of the old standard pattern of influence peddling in Kentucky," he said. "It goes *all* the way back to the 'little kingdoms.'" He blames Kentucky's many counties for a lot of its troubles, pointing out that kinship politics and cronyism are typical of most Southern states. "Sometimes I think we sit here and think we've got the worst, but then you look at Louisiana and Mississippi. Alabama. Georgia. South Carolina put a lot of its legislators in jail. Only North Carolina and Virginia have escaped."

"What about Arkansas?" I asked.

He laughed. "I'm sure! We're going to know more about that. There's a dead dog in that branch somewhere."

Clark is hard on Kentucky lawmakers for their unwillingness to vote for the greater good rather than personal gain. "It's embarrassing that our legislators were bought off so cheap—almost for a mess of pottage," he said. "They had nothing on Esau, and Esau had nothing on them. I think they said to themselves, 'It's always been done, and nobody's been caught.' But this time it's different. They ran afoul of the federal government. It wasn't a state judge setting penalties. It was a federal judge."

He explained that leading legislators into temptation has been going on since the Civil War. "The L. & N. Railroad virtually owned this state at one time," he said. "And who knows *how much influence the horse industry* has had on the state's legislation? A big unanswered question: Have some Kentucky legislators always been willing to accept picayunish bribes? I'd say yes, but I must hasten to say I don't actually know."

Clark, in his dark pin-striped suit, is gracious and proper, with a reverence for the small-town and agrarian values that are the backbone of Kentucky, but he feels that Kentucky has to embrace the twenty-first century. "The Kentucky Education Reform Act, whatever may be its weakness, offers Kentucky a main road out of the past," he said. "Think of all that has happened in the twentieth century. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, people couldn't have imagined what was going to happen. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be able to see the twenty-first century? I may not live to see it."

I guessed that gambling casinos as the wave of the future would be a nightmare vision for him.

"*Casino gambling would exert an evil* influence on Kentucky," he said. "It would take money out of the pockets of people who can't afford it. It's a regressive form of taxation. And it offers too many chances for political corruption." He also said he feared it would seduce the state away from developing alternatives to its dependence on tobacco. He told me he had never been much interested in gambling himself. He doesn't follow the horses, although he does have a huge collection of horseshoes, mounted on plaques of walnut and cherry and maple. It includes heavy shoes worn by logging mules and shoes from Man o' War, Secretariat, Sunday Silence, Genuine Risk, Wild Again, and War Admiral.

"Which racehorse had the biggest feet?" I asked.

Clark smiled. "They vary, but Man o' War's were pretty good-sized."

Man o' War, of course, is known as the greatest racehorse ever. It occurred to me that Man o' War's shoes would be hard to fill, so to speak, and that maybe that was at the heart of Kentucky's current gambling trouble. Central Kentucky used to be the undisputed capital of the horse-breeding business, but now it's spreading around the world. The industry promoted the proliferation of racetracks across the country, causing a dilution of talent comparable to what happened in baseball and football when the leagues expanded too much. In the late seventies, Arab sheikhs flocked to yearling sales here and sent Thoroughbred prices soaring. Tempted by those prices, breeders began selling much of their bloodstock. More and more offspring of champion horses were leaving Kentucky.

Our present governor, Brereton Jones, is a Thoroughbred breeder, the owner of a stud farm called Airdrie. (Merv Griffin has been known to board horses there.) As soon as Brereton (or B.C., as they call him in the horse biz) took office, he pushed hard for racing legislation that would permit off-track-betting parlors, which would fund prizes to Kentucky's top horse breeders, and he got it through. Other racing states offer such prizes, but Kentucky's program is unusual in that it takes its prize cash from O.T.B.s. Although the program promised to be a boost to "the little people" in the horse business, this spring both the Governor and the racing-commission chairman are in line for top awards. They've had a very successful year with their horses, and they expect to win some cash prizes.

But right now, for the rest of us, the prize that counts is the blanket of roses that one horse will win on Derby Day. A BOPTROT blues may be playing somewhere in the background, but we'll be singing "My Old Kentucky Home," one of the most powerful songs ever written. It's always a magic moment at the Derby, because the song seems to move just about everyone, whether they're from Kentucky or not. Happy Chandler, one of our most colorful governors, used to stand up at basketball games and sing our song. Happy would sing it every chance he got, anywhere in the world he happened to be. It's the song that calls us home. ♦

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[*From Keynotes, the newsletter of radio station WDPR, in Dayton, Ohio*]

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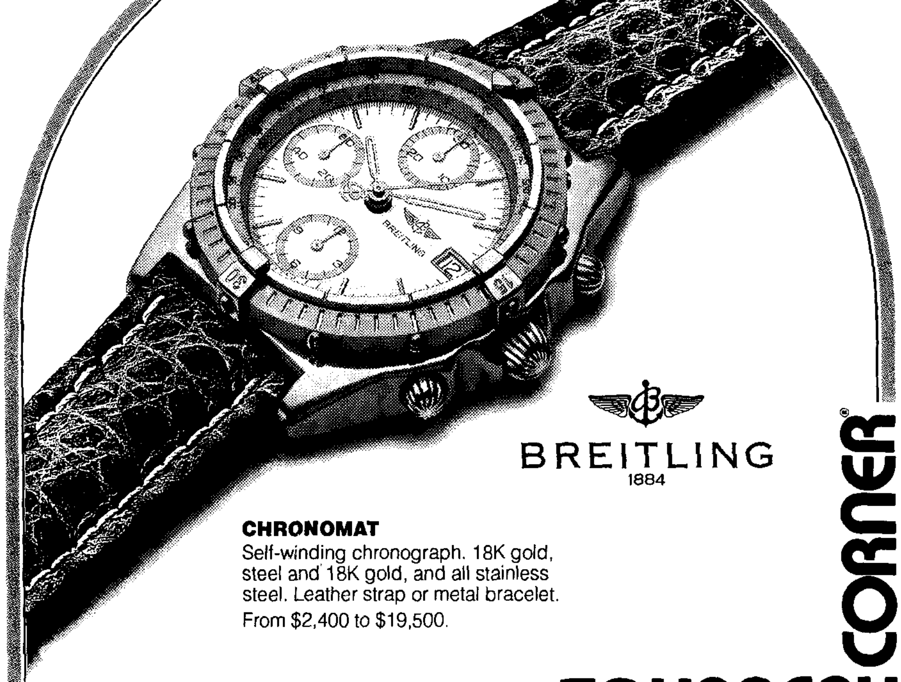

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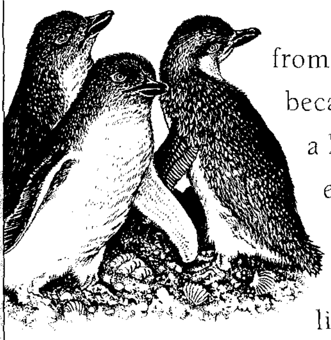

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THE GHOST OF THE GLASS HOUSE

Pierre Chareau's 1931 Glass House in Paris is an acclaimed modernist jewel, but few people have lived in it since the days when Cocteau and Aragon were among the regular guests there. So a stay in the house provided a rare visit to the world of the visionary couple who commissioned it—and of the dreams that still haunt it.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

THE Rue Saint-Guillaume is a short, narrow, dignified street on the Left Bank of Paris. It begins a few blocks below the river, crosses the Boulevard Saint-Germain, and exhausts itself, in a Chaplinesque T-shape, only two blocks later, at the Rue de Grenelle. That last block, in particular, has a funny hauteur. The only light on the western side of the street is an illuminated sign, which hangs beside a green gate guarding a courtyard. The sign, a blue circle within a red circumference, blinks off and on all night. It means, simply, "No Parking." Yet at dusk, around the time when the sign is first lit, it is not unusual to see a little clutch of well-dressed Americans or Germans or Japanese, notebooks out, cameras ready, waiting beneath the light as though it were a beacon or a symbol.

They are waiting for the gate to open, so that they can look, for a little while, at a house that sits inside the courtyard. The house is called the Maison de Verre—the Glass House. It was built in 1931 by a minor French interior decorator named Pierre Chareau, who designed it and all its furnishings, never built another house in France, and died, forgotten and alone, in New York in 1950. For most of the past ten years, the house has been uninhabited—closed to all but some friends of the owners and a few architects and designers. The visitors continue to arrive, but after dark the gate is usually shut, and the code to the little electronic keypad that opens it is kept secret.

Nonetheless, over the years a cult and a literature have grown up around the house. "The Louise Brooks of modern houses," someone once called it, in reference to its mystique, its sleek yet lyrical modernity, and, above all, its tragically interrupted and then revived career as a modern monument. At the end of the century, it seems to stand outside the squabbles of modernism and postmodernism, and point in a direction entirely its own—the house at the end of the road not taken.

Late one afternoon in June of 1989, an old friend, who had moved to France a year before, called my wife and me at our hotel while we were visiting Paris, and said that she thought she might be able to arrange a visit that evening to the Maison de Verre. Dominique Vellay, who was, she explained, one of the members of the house's family (odd expression, I thought), would be glad to show it to us. I had only a vague, graduate student's notion of what the Maison de Verre was, but my marriage was built on the extremely shaky foundation of my wife's illusion, constructed in the first year of our courtship, that in Paris I actually knew my way around town. (I had lived in Paris for a year as a teen-ager, mostly going to see old American movies in dusty repertory houses.) So I said yes, of course, the Glass House—of course we'd love to visit. We arranged to meet at six on the Rue Saint-Guillaume. Then we fell asleep, and woke up at five to six. We ran all the way from our hotel, on the Rue de Montalembert, along the Boulevard, and down the Rue Saint-Guillaume.

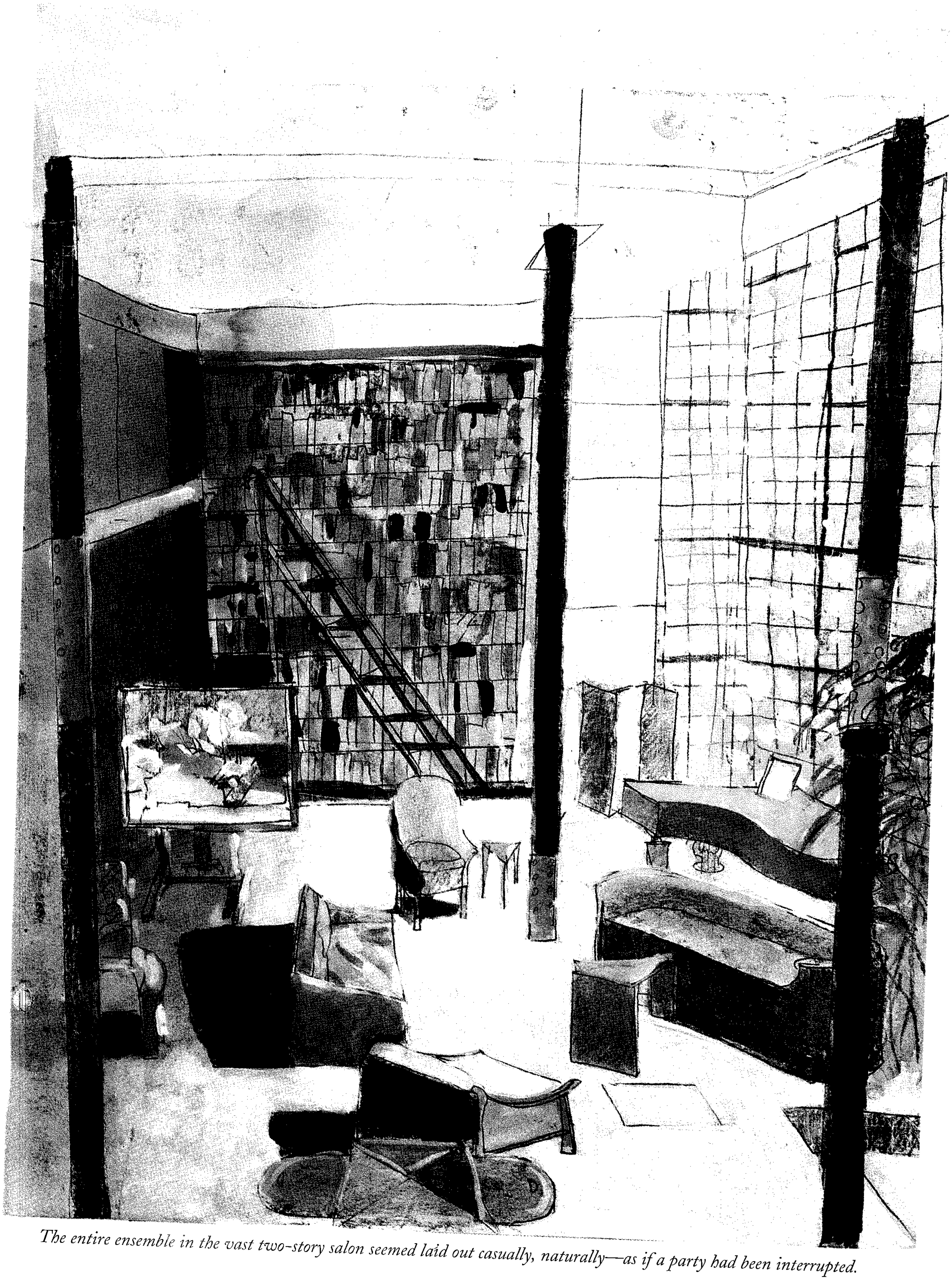
Someone had left the gate open. We stepped through, and saw, at the far end of a cobblestone courtyard, a wall of glass, gleaming in the early-evening light. It seemed unsupported—a block of translucent crystal floating in space. Then we saw that the block was cantilevered out over a steel-and-glass entranceway, and that its walls were made of hundreds of small facets of glass—cells of glass brick. It was hard to say how big the wall of glass was. It almost filled the width of the courtyard, and so it filled your field of vision.

Suddenly, the house *turned on:* the glass front began to glow like a Japanese lantern, lit from without (by two floodlights, I saw after a moment, which were set at a distance from the house on two metal ladders) in a way that made it seem to be lit from within. The articulated facets disappeared, melting into one great glow. On the lower right of the glass-brick block was a simple metal plaque, with red lettering set into it: "PIERRE CHAREAU 1931; COLL—BIJVOET; FERS—DALBET." The house was signed, it seemed, like a painting.

Afterward, we remembered that first visit as an almost random daze of quick impressions: first, a doctor's office, which had high ceilings and a floor covered with ancient, eroding rubber matting—the kind of bumpy circles-within-a-square rubber that you see now on the floor of every industrial showroom—and an extendable Cubistic desk of veneered mahogany. On the wall above the desk hung a portrait of an elegant man in a white coat, and with streamlined features and a long French jaw. A bronze Cubist bust of a woman, all facets and angles, sat on a wall cabinet. Dominique Vellay and her boyfriend, the photographer François Halard, met us in the hallway, and explained that the man was her grandfather, Dr. Jean Dalsace, and the woman her grandmother, Annie Dalsace, née Anna Bernheim. They had commissioned the house and its furnishings, she explained. Dominique's father, Dr. Pierre Vellay, still kept his practice in the office.

Then Dominique and François led us back out of the office and down a long, narrow tiled hallway, the evening light streaming in shafts around us, and we turned a corner and came to the foot of a long stairway. Tall, curving, perforated-metal screens stood at the foot of the stairs, and made the forms of the furni-

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER



The entire ensemble in the vast two-story salon seemed laid out casually, naturally—as if a party had been interrupted.

ture that we could just glimpse on the landing above look dreamy and softened, like the forms in a Seurat drawing. Dominique parted the screens—they came toward us on a hidden track and then quickly receded into a sheath. The stairway, we saw, had no handrail; it hung in space, and led up toward the light. Somehow, the house had turned us around inside it: the walk through the narrow hallway from the doctor's office had apparently taken us along a gentle, insinuating spiral, so that the wall of glass was now in front of us again, this time seeming to be the rear wall of the house—the light at the top of the stairs. (The house was to work this trick on me dozens of times in the next few years, and I never quite figured out how.) We climbed the stairs, which were clad, like the doctor's office, in faded matting, and when we came to the top we turned to our left.

We were facing a room like no other I had ever seen: a vast, two-story salon that was set alongside the great glass wall. A single bookcase, with a running ladder, filled one long wall, floor to ceiling. Over our heads, wrapped around two walls of the two-story space, was a continuous mezzanine, decorated with perforated-metal screens and low bookshelves, and punctuated by panels of burled ash. In the center of the library floor, which was also covered with rubber matting, were sofas, settees, and lots of little tables. Some of this furniture was in a style that I thought of as Art Deco; the rest was in the same jumpy, Cubist style as the desk in the doctor's office. Some of the pieces were flamboyantly upholstered; others were lacquered wood. A big Surrealist picture—a blue landscape or still-life with an unidentifiable forest of forms—stood on an easel off to one side. The entire ensemble seemed laid out casually, naturally—sofa facing sofa, chair facing chair—as though a party had been interrupted.

Three steel girders, rising right up from the foundation to the roof, stood at the corners of the room. The girders were unadorned—their rows of bolts still visible, painted a bright industrial orange and faced with black slate. The electrical wiring and the plumbing were exposed, too, and rose along the side walls in a series of attenuated, freestanding pipes. An intricate system of wheels and gears, which recalled the factory set in Chaplin's "Modern Times," stood at one end of the glass wall. It seemed to be a ventilation system: one of the wheels had apparently been turned in such a way as to push a column of steel vents open.

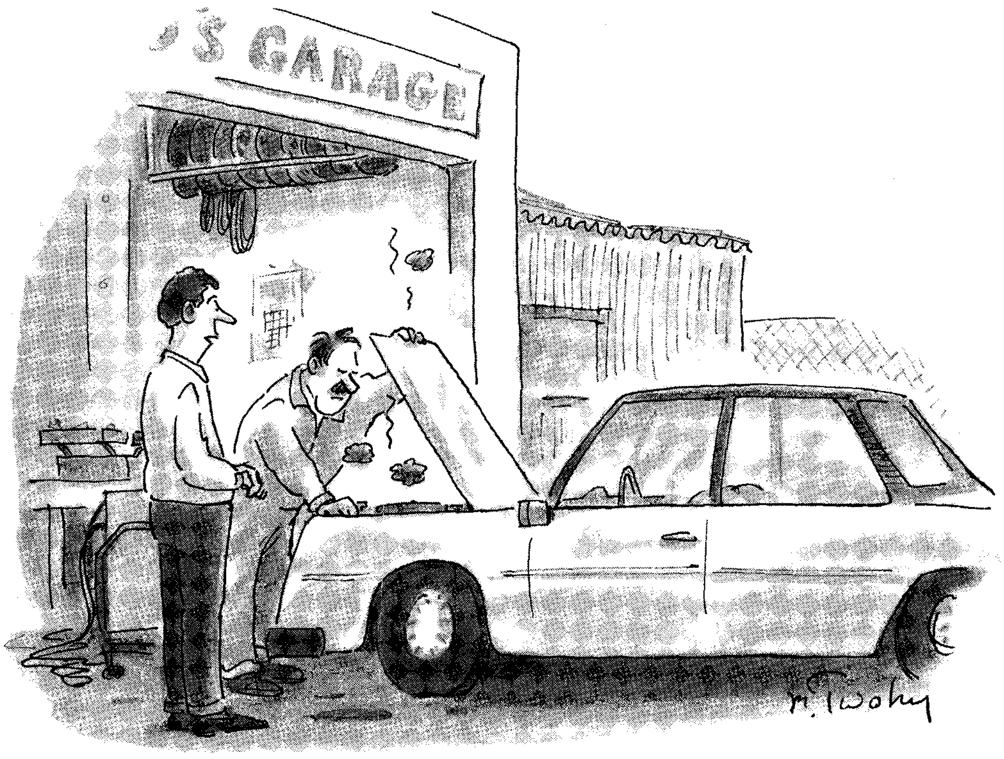
And yet the room, for all its industrial candor, had nothing raw about it. Each element had been polished or refined so that it seemed festive in its forthrightness. The exposed fixtures, the naked girders were like the fittings on a liner—signs of engineered luxury rather than of raw utility. The industrial materials—brushed aluminum and perforated metal and rubber matting—were so varied that they seemed opulent rather than reductive: a little glossary of utilitarian forms. A principle of transparency ruled. Punched screens, or aluminum mesh, held everything together; light passed even through metal.

Behind the salon was a little sitting room, all in cream, canary yellow, and marine blue, with a ship's ladder at one end, which communicated with the master bedroom, on the floor above. The ladder, Dominique showed us, could be hauled up on pulleys and hidden away in the room above, to seal it off; you could just pull it up behind you when you went to sleep. Everything in the house seemed movable: perforated-metal partitions slid; ten-foot-high metal cylinders came open at the touch of a finger, revealing themselves to be closets, as beautifully partitioned as steamer trunks. There was a preposterous bathroom upstairs, which you entered from the mezzanine that ran around the salon. It was made of white tile and brushed duralumin, and was designed, like the set of a farce, with complicated partitions, so that a man and a woman could be in it together, bathing and shaving and talking, without ever actually seeing each other.

Everywhere one's eyes turned a new harmony seemed visible: a grid of glass brick set off against a table as brightly lacquered as a Japanese box; a long stretch of rubber matting interrupted only by the polished surface of a grand piano; a folding screen painted with Cocteau-like figures placed directly behind a black iron girder—a happy marriage of Fritz Lang and Fred Astaire. It was as though everything charming and lovable that modernism had ever produced had been brought together into a single secret storeroom in the middle of Paris.

"Who lives here?" I asked.

"No one now," Dominique said. She had tried for a long



"At first, I thought it was gunfire."

time, she said, and now . . . She let the sentence trail off in the air. "*Un fantôme.* A ghost."

It was only after my wife and I returned to New York that we came to understand that what had felt like a revelation was really a vogue. When we talked to people in New York who knew about modern houses, we realized that a cult had grown up around the Glass House and its architect, Pierre Chareau. An architectural bookstore on Thompson Street had three books about the Maison de Verre constantly on order, including one in Japanese, all of them published in the last ten years. Someone told us about an international organization, the Friends of the Glass House, which exists simply to keep fans of the house in touch with one another. Though its "friends" know the house almost entirely through photographs from the three books—our visit, it turned out, was a special event—some of them had nevertheless constructed full-scale replicas of its glass façade. Not long after we got back from Paris, one popped up on a corner of Duane Park, in downtown Manhattan. A lot of big, spectacular buildings that have gone up in the last twenty years, including such outsized, multivitamin buildings as the Pompidou Center and the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, turn out to be the progeny of the little Glass House on the Rue Saint-Guillaume. (On a more mundane level, the value of the furniture inside the house is the subject of a separate, parallel cult, spearheaded by the owner of a men's store in Beverly Hills.)

TIC
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"They're baby boomers—like, you know, really old."

• •

But, for all its fame, the Glass House is an oddly reclusive and mysterious building. The mother of a friend of mine in New York, it turned out, had been a patient of Dr. Pierre Vellay's, and my friend had visited him and his wife, Aline, countless times in their apartment above the house, but had never been invited to go downstairs into the Maison de Verre itself. No one, in the books about the Glass House, could even decide exactly what it *is*. In the literature about the house, it has been compared to, among other things, a yacht, a classical Japanese temple, a Chinese Communist barracks, a furniture cabinet, Giacometti's "Palace at 4 A.M.," and Marcel Duchamp's "Large Glass." It has even been described as a window onto the fourth dimension.

The house was built, I gradually came to realize as I read more about it, as a treasure house to hold all the things that the self-consciously modern people who built it believed in; the office that we had seen on the ground floor may have been the first unofficial family-planning center in France, for instance, and the salon above had been designed to unite the Cocteau generation of French artists with the Communist intellectuals. But as these ideas dimmed or went out of fashion one after another, the house seemed to become, as if by a spell, uninhabitable. I learned that the house had been built for Dr. Dalsace and his wife, that they had had two children—a boy, Bernard, and a girl, Aline—and that Aline had married another gynecologist, Pierre Vellay, with whom she had five children. Three of the children lived in apartments in the courtyard—around, above, and across from the house. It was their legacy, and their burden. The family question was: What is to be done with the Glass House? But none of them lived inside the house.

Over the next five years, my wife, Martha, and I tried to find out why the house was uninhabited. As we did, it became our ambition to live in the Glass House, and our illusion to believe that we could.

"As a little girl, I hid here," Dominique was saying in July of 1990. Martha and I were with Dominique and Francois again, sitting on the mezzanine overlooking the salon of the Glass House. "We would kneel down here, behind the screens, invisible, to watch the soirées—the women and men talking," Dominique went on. "Everything is meant to be seen through a scrim or a screen, like this, like a memory. Do you know, the house is like a wave, something shimmering. The magic of the light that went on in the bathroom—seeing it just gleam beneath the black metal doors!" She turned and gestured to her left, toward a pair of black metal doors that led off the mezzanine to the master bedroom. The house was terribly hot. Paris was in the midst of a heat wave. It was a French heat wave, though: intense but shapely. This heat wave began at eight in the morning, rose to a pitch of intensity around noon, subsided a little in the evening, and then, at midnight, nearly to the beat, was swept away by a breeze.

"It's a passionate object, but a destructive one, like all passionate objects," Dominique went on. "I lived inside for a long time, you know. Why did I leave? I think I might have stayed."

François looked at her and then he said, gently, "Dodo, it was the best thing."

"Yes, it was like Sleeping Beauty," she said, laughing. Their apartment, across the courtyard from the Glass House, which I had seen, was a world of light and color—Louis XVI furniture and parquet floors and yellow linen curtains. There were three Twomblys hanging on the yellow-washed walls. Only a single Chareau metal coatrack, in the hallway—the hangers of heavy, broad metal, like big French mustaches—reminded you of the proximity of the Glass House. I thought, a little disloyally, that the apartment might have seemed a bit of a relief after the austerities of the house. She seemed to think so, too.

"Did you know," she said after I praised the apartment, "that it was Léon Daudet's apartment in the thirties?" She shook her head, in apparent wonder. But the name meant little to me, and I let it go by.

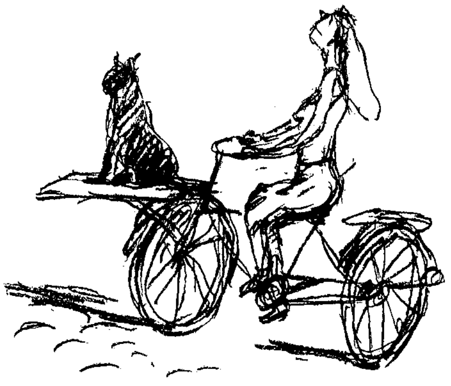
We drove to Le Voltaire, a restaurant on the Quai Voltaire that the Vellay family frequents. "It suits me better, doesn't it?" she said of the apartment, after we had sat down and ordered *champagnes framboises*. "And the house is still across the way—our parents looking down at us, like two giant overseeing eyes. All families build a Glass House, open to the world, and live inside it: these houses are our inheritance. My family's house has the burden of being real as well. It needs to be heated and have its taxes paid."

Now Dominique said, abruptly, "Do you want to know what really led to the Glass House? Did you notice the furniture in the dining room? That is one of the keys to understanding the house."

Later, when I went back to the house, I looked at the dining-room furniture. The dining alcove, which was tucked away beside the salon, contained a table and chairs that were uncharacteristically simple, clunky, appealing—the kind of dining-room set my grandparents had.

"That was the Bernheim family furniture, and it was always kept in the house, though in style it didn't really belong," Dominique said. "But it was important to my grandmother. The house was built because my great-grandfather loved his daughter to distraction. He bought her pictures, furniture, and a house. The Glass House began because of the love of a father for his daughter."

To understand how the Glass House came to be, I began to see, it was necessary to learn something about French Jews, Parisian houses, and German glass. In France, at the beginning of this century, some Jews tried to keep just below the ordinary surface of French life, while others tried to skim along just above it. The first impulse, which feels familiar to Americans, because Jewish life here followed a similar course, involved merchants and real-estate agents and other newly arrived middle-class people—people who made a little money, spent it somewhat lavishly, and occupied a satisfied, watchful position just outside the mainstream of French society. Many of them had German names. They had fled from Alsace-Lorraine as the Franco-Prussian War ended, in 1871.



The second impulse was more peculiarly French. You saw it in civil servants and Army officers and diplomats—Jews who were not merely "assimilated" but passionately committed to an ideal of French identity that was not commonplace even among other French people. They saw the French nation that had emerged since the Revolution as a place destined to remove Jews from the ghetto and return them to the world. (In the eighteen-nineties, the "Prayer for France" in the standard Jewish prayer book began, "Almighty protector of Israel and humanity.") This was the milieu that Dreyfus himself emerged from—and, oddly, *returned* to, even after Devil's Island.

Pierre Chareau came from the more ordinary milieu. His mother was Sephardic, his father a wine merchant who had fallen on hard times. Though from childhood Pierre wanted to design things, he was not able to study architecture, which in those days was still a grand profession in France, dedicated to teaching its adherents how to construct libraries and operas and triumphal arches rather than houses. (His lack of absorption into the rules of the grand profession, it turned out, was part of his good luck, though it could not have seemed that way at the time.) He worked as a draftsman in the Paris office of Waring & Gillow, the prominent English furniture-and-design company, until 1914.

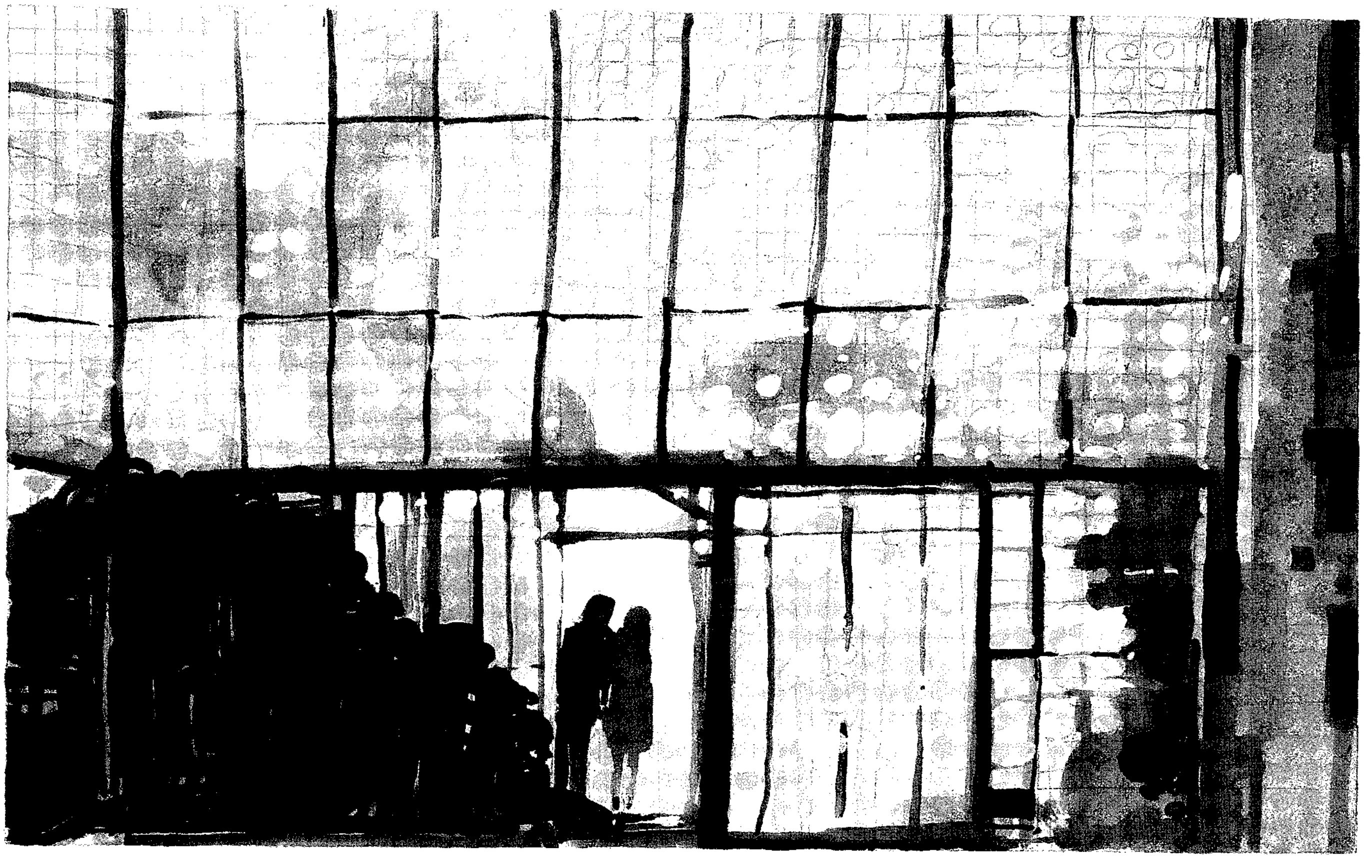
It was not a plum job but not quite a dead end, either. The furniture that Pierre Chareau designed for Waring & Gillow was mostly undistinguished. What he loved was shows. He wrote little operas, and was putting them on as early as 1905; in fact, the first designs of his that are known to have survived are sketches for a series of amateur *tableaux vivants*. Waring & Gillow designed several theatres while Chareau was there, among them the Gaîté, the Vaudeville, the Ambigu, and the Renaissance, some of which still survive.

He had another enthusiasm as well. In our fixed imagination of the early twentieth century, we have by now assigned technical innovation to America, and *bonheur de vivre* to France: we fly the rockets and they serve the cheese. At the beginning of the century, though, and even after the First World War, the French tradition of innovation and invention had a style of its own. You see that alternative civilization at work in Lartigue's photographs of his family in balloons, or in Méliès's first movies: airplanes and cars and rockets imagined in a way that allied them, however preposterously, with sport and romance rather than industry. Chareau belonged to this vein of the *ingénieux*, as the French like to put it, more than to any kind of Beaux-Arts manner. He loved tinkering, thinking up new inventions. Every great designer has a pet object, a motif of self-expression. For most of the major moderns, that object was the chair. Chareau's medium was closets. His early closets have doors that swing open and spin around like cake stands, or have doors inside their doors, which unfasten to reveal yet more doors, with fragrant cedar panels hidden inside. To the end of his life, Chareau kept coming up with such schemes and inventions, designed to lend romance to everyday necessities. The designer Francis Jourdain, one of his oldest friends, recalls a dream he had just after Chareau's death: in his dream, he saw an old-fashioned glass elevator, with a wood-burning stove and a telescoping stovepipe inside, scaling up and down the façade of a house. "Pierre Chareau designed that!" he remembers thinking in the dream.

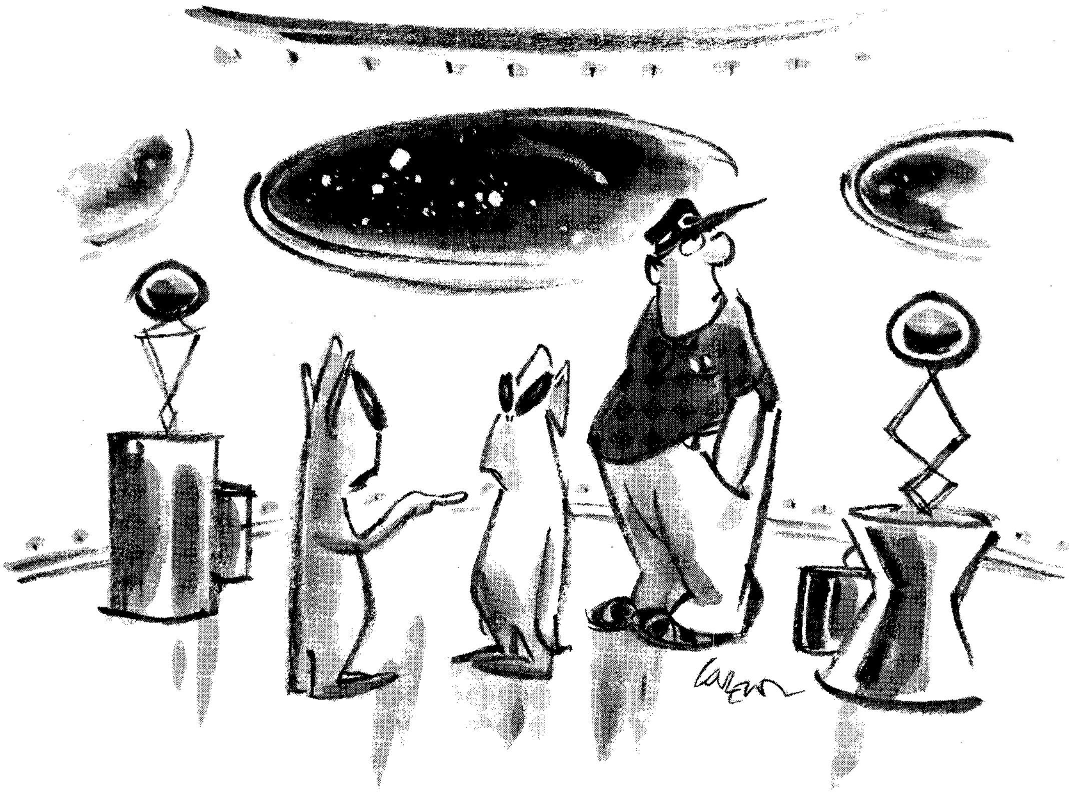
Chareau's enthusiasm for invention would probably have come to nothing more than a footnote had he not been discovered by a couple who could afford to have him make built-in closets on a dramatic scale. Annie and Jean Dalsace represented a marriage of the two streams of French Jewish life. Annie Bernheim's father was a self-made man whose family, like so many, had come west from Alsace-Lorraine after 1871. The Bernheims settled in Paris at the turn of the century, and made a small fortune in real estate. Then, around the time of the First World War, they moved to an apartment on the Rue d'Anjou, on the Right Bank. The Bernheims' only son, Pierre, was killed in the Argonne in April, 1915. All the family's love and hope (and money) then came to be lavished on its only daughter.

Annie was born in 1896, and as a teen-ager she was already aristocratic—shy, precise, demanding, and gifted. She was one of those women in the early years of the century who, still unable to pursue a profession or "career," began to invest the "feminine" sphere of life with a wild but systematic passion. Not that her tastes were frivolous or superficial. Once, for her birthday, her father offered her jewelry, and she asked instead for a picture by a young painter named Picasso. By her teens, she had taken over the decoration of the Rue d'Anjou apartment. Fashion, flowers, jewelry, cooking, furniture, the colors of a house, the shape of a living room—all these things quickly came under her precise eye, and were reshaped to a new rule. Annie believed that pleasures benefitted by being made subject to principles. She had rules for looking. If you went to an art gallery, you were to look at five pictures, no more and no less. Four would have been insufficient; six would have been dilettantism. "It was a time of red roses, and she made them white," Dominique said, epigrammatically, of her grandmother.

Jean Dalsace, whom Annie married in 1918, was a perfect product of the official stream of French Jewish life. His


ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Suddenly, the house turned on: the glass front began to glow like a Japanese lantern.



"You abducted him—you feed him."

father came from a line of high-ranking civil servants, and he hoped that his son would study law. But Jean wanted to be a doctor instead, and after he got his law degree he went to medical school, and in 1926 got a degree in gynecology. In America, such a choice would have been unlikely for an intellectually ambitious young doctor; gynecology here was still a homely, sympathetic specialty. But in France the scientific study of reproduction had an overtone of courage and optimism. Its displaced subject was sex. To *plan* babies, without the peasant mystifications of midwifery or the overtones of shame and necessary suffering that a Catholic society still imposed, was to take part in the modern revolution: it was, in an alarmingly, almost comically literal sense, to seize control of the means of production.

Jean Dalsace was a man of the left. After the Second World War, he even joined the Communist Party and visited Moscow. ("Annie was not a Communist," Dominique told me, "but she declared herself a woman of the left.") Jean systematically believed in systematic belief. Later in life, he joined Freud to Marx, and became a lay analyst himself. ("I asked him once why a gynecologist would want to be an analyst," Dominique recalled. " 'Fundamentally,' he said, 'it is the same investigation.' ")

The Dalsaces' seems like a touchstone "hypergamous" marriage: she supplied the money, and he supplied the social position. She had the style; he had the ideas. But it was more complicated than that. Annie was an obsessive, rather than a fashionable, woman. Her tastes were too intense, and too singular, to be charming or conventionally "social." She did not supply her husband, as fashionable women are expected to, with conventional comfort or conventional elegance. Theirs was a love based on a set of common beliefs, invested in a set of charmed objects: the clinic; the higher, misty reaches of French Marxism; and, above all, the place where they lived, and the way it was made to look. When they decided to build a house, in 1927, there was only one man whom they even considered to design it.

Annie had met Pierre Chareau when she was still a girl. One of the things that made her so French was her love of things English—a talisman, as in Proust, of advanced taste in Paris at the beginning of the century. It was natural for Annie to ask her father for private English lessons, and during the First World War she studied with an Englishwoman named Louise Chareau, whom everyone called Dollie. (Dollie had admired Pierre's ability in music, painting, and drawing since their first meeting, when he was sixteen and she was nineteen; they had married in 1904.) Dollie was sixteen years older than Annie, and seems to have been the kind of woman who was always quick to make up her mind, and quick to make up the minds of other people for them. It was through Dollie that Annie became acquainted with modern painting and design, and it was also through Dollie that Annie became acquainted with Pierre Chareau, when he came back from the war. The Dalsaces and the Chareaus became inseparable.

Though Pierre and Dollie were the poorer of the two couples, they soon became among the keenest collectors of avant-garde art in France. There is a wonderful photograph of Chareau from the nineteen-twenties, posing in front of his three great early Picasso Cubist collages. He also bought one of the very first Mondrians to enter a French collection. Yet in his own early work—for Waring & Gillow, and also in what he did after he set out on his own—there was very little radical or avant-garde invention. Mostly, he made luxury furniture, in a comfortable, bourgeois style.

The only original characteristic of Chareau's early design is a vein of gentle and obstinate tyranny. He designed a whole series of desks, for instance, with steeply sloping surfaces, just because he hated the look of stray paper. Put your work down on a Chareau desk and a moment later it is on the floor. The sloping desks look out at you from the Chareau catalogues like divas, self-satisfied and impossible. The desks are perhaps an index to his character. His friends, in their memoirs of Chareau, use a descriptive language—"hypersensitive," "high-strung," "temperamental"—that has about it a hint of affectionate euphemism. In plain English, Chareau was touchy and moody—charming, but without the commanding self-confidence that makes prima donnas tolerable, or even exhilarating. It isn't any surprise, really, that he could work only for a small circle of clients—basically, just for the young Dalsaces and the old Bernheims.

Annie and Jean had been living since their marriage in an apartment at 195 Boulevard Saint-Germain—in an arrondissement that, without being unfashionable, still had about it a slight bohemian air, like Greenwich Village in New York at the same time. Eventually, Jean decided that he wanted to incorporate his office, and his practice, into his home, and the Bernheims bought their daughter and son-in-law an eighteenth-century *hôtel particulier*—a residential building that wraps around a courtyard—on the Rue Saint-Guillaume. They wanted to build a house that could serve as an office, a clinic, a home, and a salon—a house "created under the sign of amity, in perfect affective accord," Jean wrote later.

At first, Chareau intended simply to pull down the old building and put up a new one in its place. But an old woman and her daughter—durable anti-Semites, according to family legend—lived in an apartment on the top floor of the rear quarter, and refused to vacate. So Chareau realized that the house would have to be inserted under the women's apartment, rather than constructed from the ground up. This suited him fine: the entire house could become a kind of built-in cabinet, a closet. In part because the courtyard didn't get much light, and in part because it had never been done before, he decided to enclose the house within two walls of glass.

"TELL me what you want to know." Marc Vellay, Dominique's brother, said, a little impatiently, when we met by the door to the house on another hot evening. "I could spend several days showing you the interior." Marc is the Dalsaces' grandson—the fifth child and only son of Aline and Pierre Vellay—and after a long period as a '68-vintage anarchist he became devoted to the Glass House and the memory of Pierre Chareau. His two books on Chareau (one written with the historian Kenneth Frampton) are the most important and thorough sources of information on his life and work. ("Marc was essentially a Trotskyist, really," Dominique once explained to me gravely. "The Maoists were too spontaneous for him.")

I said that I was interested in everything, and he began to show me through the house again.

"The first radicalism of the house lies in the orientation of the entrance, and the series of implied spirals that are as much a part of the architecture of the house as the glass façade," he said as we walked inside. "It is the first house where you have to enter by making a sharp turn. This brings you in. During the day, the light invites you in toward the office, and you describe a small circle." He stopped, took a piece of paper from his pocket, and drew the path you had to take to get from the front door to the stairs; it was a diagram of the trick the house kept playing on me.

"Then at night—when you enter the social realm of the house—you describe a much larger spiral, but still a spiral, as the floodlit glass bricks lead you up toward the now opened stairway." He drew a second diagram. "So this series of tighter or looser spirals and spiralling movements is a human element of the house, in contrast to the vertical and horizontal orientation of the other elements. The coördination of the human spirals with the steel-and-glass architectonics is the real grammar of the house. The architecture, the furniture, and the human movement of the Maison de Verre are an ensemble." As we mounted the stairs toward the library, he asked rhetorically, "Does that mean that every piece of furniture must remain in place?" and answered, "No, of course not. In fact, the ensembles of furniture have changed, been moved, several times. The notion of a fixed, invariable ensemble is fictitious. However, the number of possible solutions is delimited. The house itself, like a thinking machine, will reject the wrong solutions."

Upstairs, we looked at the furniture in the library. "The idea of an ensemble had long been present in Chareau's work," Marc said. "The breakthrough or discontinuity in Chareau's work does not lie there. It is that before this there is no obsession with light." Gesturing broadly around us, he went on, "The house is an extrapolation of a life space that lies behind so much twentieth-century architecture: the artist's studio. The single big space and a working, sleeping space above—that's the controlling idea. Here it is articulated with invisibility. The articulation of space is essentially the same as that of a classic *hôtel particulier* of the eighteenth century, with the owner's hobby rooms on the ground floor; entertaining on the first floor, called the 'noble' floor; the intimate family life on the second floor; and servants' quarters above."

Then he asked himself another question—"Is there any Japanese architectural influence?"—and answered, "No. There are two manifest decorative influences in the house."

"Deco?" I volunteered.

"Not Deco at all. There is nothing Deco in the Glass House. There are elements of nautical design and of Japanese-influenced design." He was referring to the popularity of Japonaiserie in the late nineteenth century. "Not Japanese architecture itself. There were no Japanese books available. The technology for the kind of glass brick Chareau used was only six months old when he embraced it."

Before we went down to the ground floor, we stood for a moment at the top of the stairs. "My grandmother would always greet her guests up here, at the head of the stairs," he said. "The light behind her would appear . . ." He paused.

"Glowing?" I suggested.

He looked at me again. "She appeared with an aureole of light illuminating the social space behind her," he said calmly. "The Light House would be a better name than the Glass House, in many ways, since glass is an element here only for the manipulation of light."

I asked him what future he could foresee for the house.

"I do not want to live in the house," he said, "but I want the house to live."

BEFORE 1900, a glass house meant either a hothouse or a railroad station. Glass was as much the material of the nineteenth century as of the twentieth, but found its expression mostly in vast public buildings—the Crystal Palace and its kin. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century did architects and designers begin to think about making glass houses for people to live in. The change was partly technical—lightweight steel frames could now support entire walls of glass brick—but mostly intellectual, "ideological." The functional, positive tradition that had produced the great exhibition halls of the nineteenth century treated glass as a public material, a showcase for the triumphs of civilization. It was this tradition that continued to inform the faith in glass architecture of the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier. We should live within a "public" skin, they thought, because all life should be communal.

But in Europe just before the First World War a second tradition of what a glass building could be began to be revived—a tradition rooted in fantasy rather than in fact. Its distant roots, as the art historian Rosemarie Haag Bletter has pointed out, lay in the old architectural legend that Solomon had built a palace of glass for the Queen of Sheba. It looked back, as well, to the stained-glass cult of the Middle Ages, and ran through to a nineteenth-century German tradition of nature mysticism—the notion that transparent houses could connect man and nature.

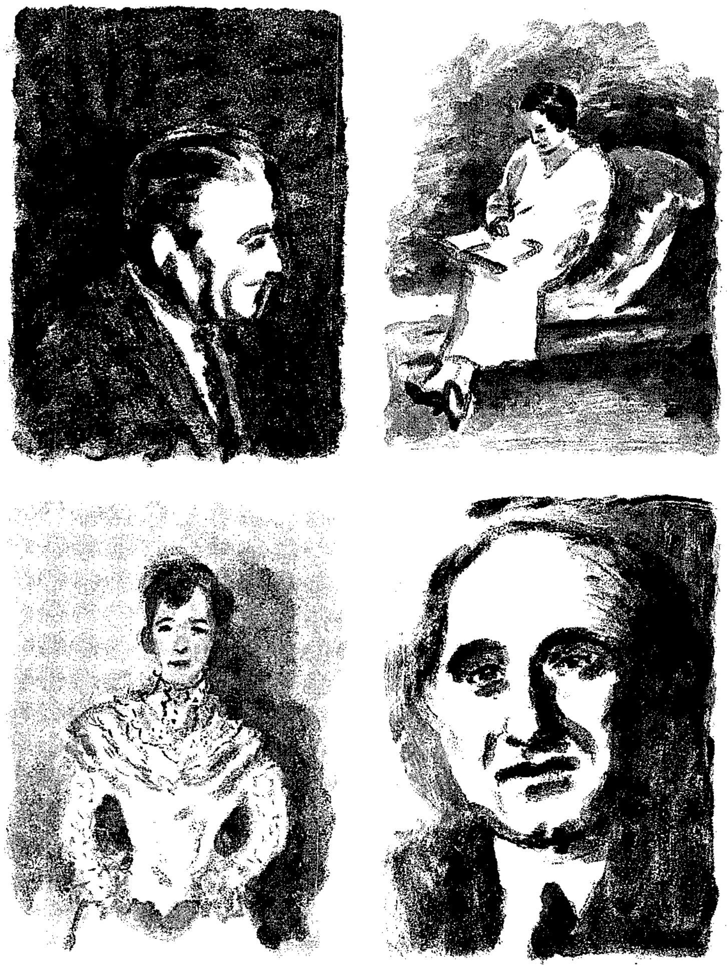
It was Paul Scheerbart, a German writer and designer, who, in 1914, gave this second, fantastic vision a form for modernity. In what may be the most sublimely goofy novel of the twentieth century, "Gray Cloth and Ten Per Cent White"—one part Jules Verne fantasy to nine parts Windex ad—he tells the story of an American architect named Edgar Krug (though the story is set in Chicago, the characters all have German names), who travels around the world in his private dirigible, equipped with a glass gondola, and solves mankind's problems by building glass houses for everybody. In the end, Mr. and Mrs. Krug relax in their own glass house, leaning back and staring up at the cupola to watch the changing patterns of light.

Scheerbart was somehow able to rein in the fantasy long enough to write, in that same year, a manifesto for glass building—it was called "Glass Architecture"—which was taken quite seriously, and became immensely influential; he inspired a whole group of architects and designers in Germany, who called themselves the Glass Chain. In a passage that seems to anticipate the Maison de Verre, he wrote, "In order to raise our culture to a higher level, we are forced, whether we like it or not, to change our architecture. And this will be possible only if we free the rooms in which we live of their enclosed characters. This, however, we can only do by introducing a glass architecture which admits the light of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars, not only through a few windows, but through as many walls as feasible, these to consist entirely of glass—of colored glass."

This vein of Expressionist fantasy inspired even Walter Benjamin, whose gloom about modernity has done so much to make other people gloomy about it, too. In 1940, just before his suicide in the South of France, Benjamin looked back longingly at Scheerbart's vision. The children of the twentieth century, he wrote, still "yearn for a world in which they can bring their poverty—the outer and ultimately the inner too—to such a pure and clear validity that something decent will come out of it." This purity might still be achieved by glass buildings. "To live in a glass house is a revolutionary virtue par excellence," Benjamin wrote. "It is also an intoxication, a moral exhibitionism that we badly need."

Whether Chareau knew the "crystal" tradition at first or second, or even third, hand will probably never be known. It was his genius to direct his glass fantasy into a classical, rectilinear style. He got to the fantasy by sticking doggedly to the facts. Instead of imagining a vast, crystalline house, transparent Gothic vault piled upon clear Byzantine arch, he simplified the structure of his house, making it an almost absurdly plain sandwich: a glass-brick wall on the front, a glass-brick wall on the back, and floors on stilts between them. Then he lit the house, from outside, with spots. He was thinking just like a cabinetmaker, but the result was a house that held glass fact and glass fantasy in perfect balance. Then, inside the house he used glass the way an interior decorator can—sweetly, on a small scale, and with decorum.

The house took four years to build. In its construction, Chareau had a crucial ally, an ironsmith named Bernard Dalbet. Dalbet is the forgotten genius—



Jean and Annie Dalsace (top) were devoted to radical modernist ideals. Dollie and Pierre Chareau were early collectors of avant-garde art. The four became inseparable.

GERARD NICOLAS

perhaps the real maker—of the Glass House. (His is the third name on the signature plate of the house: "Fers—Dalbet." "Fers" is short for ironwork. Bijvoët, the other name, was Chareau's Dutch architectural collaborator.) Dalbet was an artisan—just a blacksmith, really—of a very old-fashioned French sort. (He did the wonderful ironwork in the Bofinger brasserie up near the Bastille, which is still intact.) Sensing that something new might be made of forged furniture, Chareau had begun to collaborate with Dalbet the year just before he undertook the construction of the Glass House, and, with Dalbet as his instrument (or, perhaps, as his inspiration), he had begun to make objects—desks, lamps, wardrobes—that had some of the character we associate with the Glass House: openness, a quirky sense of scale, an illusion of freedom, of change and movement. Dalbet, without plans, forged the house's fixtures—its chairs and rails and doors—every night in his smithy, on the Rue Capron. Although the Glass House is made to look as if it had been factory- or machine-produced, each structural element in the house was in fact custom-wrought. I once came across a photograph of the Dalbet smithy. It is something right out of Goya: three smiths, forearms dense with muscle, hammering away at a forge.

RECOVERY ROOM

My name stands next to me,
calling to me, "Wake up!"
The glare of bright lamps
pecks at my eyes. I hear
the gossip of nurses—one nurse
cheerfully taking orders
for coffee .and sandwiches.

Days later, alone in my room,
I think how the insect wings
of nerves swarmed over me,
how I risked my life each day
to climb on top of a pile
of handshakes and smiles,
how I walked all over my body
with the jackboots of my longings.

My kidneys, patient as waterwheels,
had no use for these ambitions.
All they wanted was to feel
the leisure of water, the calm
slow turning of day and night.
With tubes in my arms in a white bed
my only longing is to live.

Looking out of the window, I see time
as clouds slow-moving over the walls
of houses, through vaults of sky.
I feel myself a multimillionaire of time,
a Daniel Boone in a wilderness
of fatherly trees, who stands on peaks
and sweeps the green horizon with his eyes,
the stonecrop clearings lost in the quiet
of grass—the long foundation of the animals,
holy automatons, ignorant of my need
to volunteer for death.

—ROBERT WINNER

ACCORDING to the Dalsace family legend, Le Corbusier would come secretly to the courtyard and watch as the house rose. Then he went and built the Villa Savoye. Around this time, Philip Johnson visited the house, too. I spoke to him about it once, over lunch.

"Well, you have to remember the last time I was in the Maison de Verre it was unoccupied," he said after I began quizzing him about the house. I assumed he meant that he had seen it in the last twenty years, since the Dalsaces had died. Had that been in the late sixties? I asked.

"No, no," he said crossly. "I mean in 1929, *before* anybody moved in."

But Johnson and his colleague Henry Russell Hitchcock left the Glass House out of their big and influential 1932 show, on the "International Style." They thought, I gather, that it looked too decorative. Its absence meant that throughout the thirties the house had almost no reputation in England and America. The French press, for its part, was contemptuous of the Glass House. When it opened, in 1931, it became a minor *scandale* in the Parisian papers, with a predictable round of jokes about houses made of glass, and people who live in them. The columnist Lucien Farnoux-Reynaud wrote in *Le Figaro*, "Didn't they just build the famous house of glass in a Parisian street? . . . It is neither wisdom nor folly. . . . What does this innovation mean? What advantages does it have? . . . The best use of glass is, still, for drinking."

Nevertheless, the Glass House became a salon. For a few years, everyone went there. The dramatis personae on the Rue Saint-Guillaume throughout the nineteen-thirties were a nearly astrological configuration of all the intellectual forces at work in France. The Communists and Surrealists were all there: Aragon and Paul Éluard, Cocteau and Tanguy and Miró and Max Jacob.

For the people who loved it, the Glass House was simply a superior salon, a folly, a place to go for talk and dinner, one more amusing place in Paris. For some other people, it had more sinister meanings. When Dominique mentioned that she lived in the apartment where Léon Daudet had lived in the thirties, I thought of him only, and vaguely, as a minor French literary figure. Léon and Lucien Daudet, I found out later, were sons of Alphonse Daudet, the great novelist of the late nineteenth century. Lucien had been a friend of Proust's, perhaps one of his closest friends. But Léon was a writer, too—a sharp, skillful essayist and editorialist. He was also the most virulent, active, and powerful anti-Semite in France. He was the leading editorial writer of Charles Maurras's *L'Action Française*, and every day he explained to his readers, from his apartment looking down on the Glass House, that it was the cosmopolitan, modernizing Jews who were destroying France, and that they ought to be removed from Paris, or killed.

"I WAS in the house for the first time in 1939," Pierre Vellay told me one evening over a meal at the restaurant on the Quai Voltaire. "My romance with Aline began in September, we were engaged in October, and we married in November. All in Vichy—I am a Vichyssois."

We had just come from the apartment over the house—the anti-Semitic women's apartment—where Pierre and Aline Vellay have lived since just after the Second World War. There had been no light shining on the house that night. It must be broken, I'd thought, and I imagined how complicated and expensive it must be to keep the house lit. In the Vellays' apartment only a single Chareau lamp as you came in reminded you of where you were. Dr. Vellay, a tall, dapper, gently ironic man in his early seventies, was wearing, in the heat, a short-sleeved white shirt with thin blue stripes. He'd offered us Scotch, not wine, and crackers, which he called "cakes," using the English word.

1.25
NOW PLAYING

"When I saw the house for the first time, I thought that it was terribly cold," he said now. "I was a petit bourgeois, from a bourgeois place. A house where the rooms were not rooms shocked me. It was terrifying—her parents, this strange house. The first time I saw the house, you see, it was already empty. They had stored all the furniture and all the books in the country. Throughout the war, I came to Paris clandestinely, and I slipped inside the house on the Rue Saint-Guillaume, to see that everything was all right. The Gestapo considered taking the house for a little while, but there was no way to light it after curfew. And soon, before we knew it, Jean and I were both in the Army. After the fall of France, I joined the Resistance in 1940. We had to construct a parallel health corps, and that took some time. I kept coming back to Paris for meetings. Was I frightened? No. I would come back and look at the Glass House. The concierge let me in, to check. Was she a friend of the family? No, just a concierge. The courtyard was empty then. I would come to Paris and look at the house, and then come and sit among the Germans, unconcerned. They never would have thought that I was in the Resistance. I looked—Aryan." He made the word sound intrinsically comic. "I came here, and liked to sit among the Germans."

"Where did you go?" I asked.

He looked a little puzzled. "Here," he repeated.

" '*Ici*'—*où*?" I said. Where in Paris, I meant.

"In the cellar. Here—*ici*." Suddenly, I realized that by "*ici*" he did not mean "here in Paris." He meant "here in this restaurant." (The next day, I went back to the Voltaire, and belatedly found, on its façade, a plaque stating that its owners had been leaders in the French Resistance, during the Occupation.)

"Jean helped launch me as an obstetrician," Pierre went on. "It's a good métier. Jean was a complete man, a man of a sort no longer made in the world. He was the most widely read man I have ever met—medicine, literature, engineering. Look at the double shelves in his library! He intimidated me, believe me, he was so widely read. I am a man of narrowly gauged interests, and I am not ruled by passion. I am a logical man, a demi-bourgeois, only half a man of the left. Jean was a man of constant, immense courage. He fought for birth control in the thirties, when it was still forbidden. He won the Croix de Guerre in the war. It's a paradoxical thing—we are the most decorated pacifist family in France. My own son, Marc, became an anarchist." Dr. Vellay used the same tone for "anarchist" that he had used for "métier." "Dr. Dalsace supported him. For me, the spirit of the house is all of Rue Saint-Guillaume, not just the house so called. It is the spirit of freedom. I want only things that have this spirit to happen at the house. Whoever inherits, it must be someone who really loves Chareau. After Dr. Dalsace's death, we thought of moving downstairs. But we were comfortable. It was our home. We had a home, we couldn't leave it. The Maison de Verre is a portrait of another marriage. If I died tomorrow I'd have had a satisfying life—experiences, opportunities. If I died tomorrow, my life would have been complete. The Maison for me is a place where, even if the children should leave, the spirit of the Maison de Verre would remain."

With the kind of unearned intimacy you can sometimes achieve on a first meeting, I asked Dr. Vellay how he had come to be a humanist. He looked at me gravely, and said, "With a Catholic mother, a Protestant father, a Jewish wife, and a Communist father-in-law, what other choice did I have?"

CHAREAU went to work for the French Army in 1939. He had a typically Chareauesque idea for fighting the war. He designed a system of wooden packing cases for supplies; at the delivery end, they could be turned into tables and chairs for the soldiers who unpacked them. The French government thought that this was a good idea; Chareau worked on it until the French government surrendered.

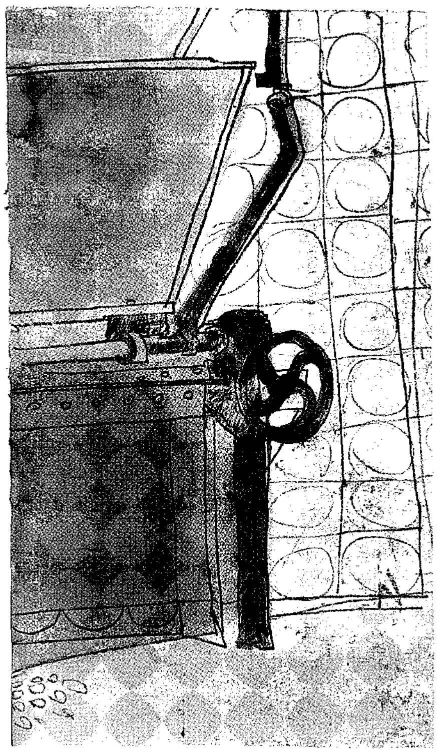
By the time the Germans arrived, the Dalsaces had abandoned the house and joined the Resistance; Chareau and Dollie had fled to America. They arrived in New York at what might have seemed to be the perfectly auspicious moment. It was a time when the great generation of European architects were all arriving in America—Mies, Gropius, Marcel Breuer—and each was beginning to create a following and a body of work. But not Chareau. Of all the émigré architects and artists whose reputations have held through or grown into our own day, Chareau had the hardest time in New York, and accomplished the least. He built nothing in the city, and very little trace of him remains. He designed a house in East Hampton for the painter Robert Motherwell, but that was about all. (He later built a little cottage for himself, but it was hardly more than a shack.)

Motherwell, who knew and loved French culture, had seen pictures of the Glass House, and asked Chareau to design a house for him. It was the middle of the war, and Motherwell had little money to spend. Chareau, with more ingenuity than conviction, perhaps, remodelled a Quonset hut—one of those semicircular corrugated-metal temporary shelters in which soldiers were housed—cutting away one side and turning it into a rudimentary house and greenhouse. It lasted until 1985 and was, on the evidence of a few surviving photographs, a kind of makeshift Maison de Verre. By a generous eye, it can even be seen to anticipate some of Frank Gehry's funky California houses.

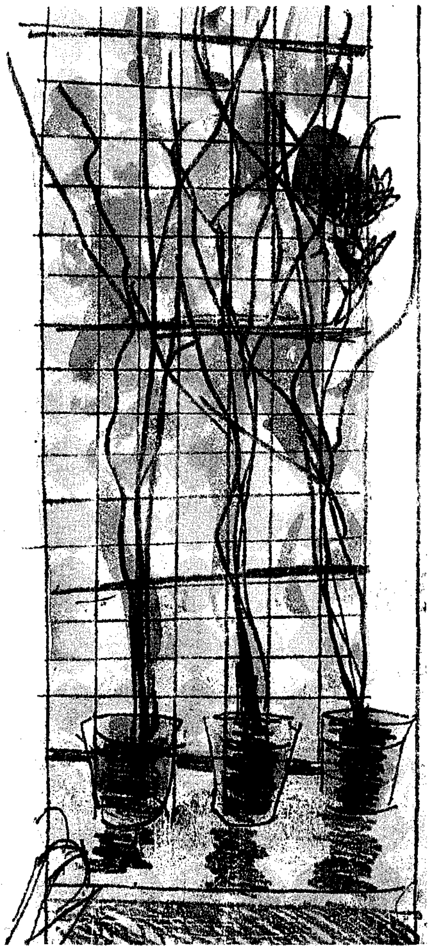
Why was Chareau so unsuccessful, when all around him the other émigré modernists were in an *extase* of renewed ambition? It is hard to find a convincing answer. His work depended on an entirely "artisanal" approach to building, of course, and that was not easily adapted to the technological production of American architecture. But other architects—Breuer, for instance—had to make similar leaps from small-scale, handmade domestic work to big corporate work. There were rich men's houses as well as rich men's offices to build. Why couldn't Chareau have designed a few of those?

"He was never really *around*," Philip Johnson says, with bewilderment, trying to recall Chareau in the forties. That may be it. Architecture—for good or ill, but inevitably—is a social art. The job is to get the job. Mies and Gropius were masters, with schools that trailed behind them. Nobody trailed behind Pierre Chareau. He probably wouldn't have known what to do if anybody had.

In the last two years of Chareau's life, his close friends were a young émigré couple who collected art and summered in East Hampton—Leo Castelli and Ileana Sonnabend. "Chareau was a wonderful man," Ileana recalls. "He was so lovely, and so funny. He had wit without cruelty, which is a rare thing. He had it, though. He was such a spiritual presence—he never spoke of himself, never pressed forward. Never *complained*. It would have been ugly. And he never spoke of the Glass House, because it would have been to speak of himself. Dollie was living in New York, and she would come over—they understood each other. But she was in New York, and he was in East Hampton. Things would suddenly bring him up, out of himself. The smallest thing could set him off into joy. Once, Motherwell's wife was cutting vegetables in the kitchen. It was just—I don't know—beautiful. Pierre became so excited. Life should be like that, he said, a stage—a house should be a stage, with the smallest things set off, done properly. He loved life—pretty women, good food and wine. He disliked few people. He disliked Harold Rosenberg. Harold would come over, and everyone would drink. He would place a bottle in front of Motherwell, tease him about being a 'Boy Scout.' Pierre hated that. He knew very few architects. Perhaps that's why he had no prospects. I remember once someone, so thoughtlessly, introduced him to a new person as 'Motherwell's decorator.' "



A geared ventilation system reminiscent of "Modern Times."

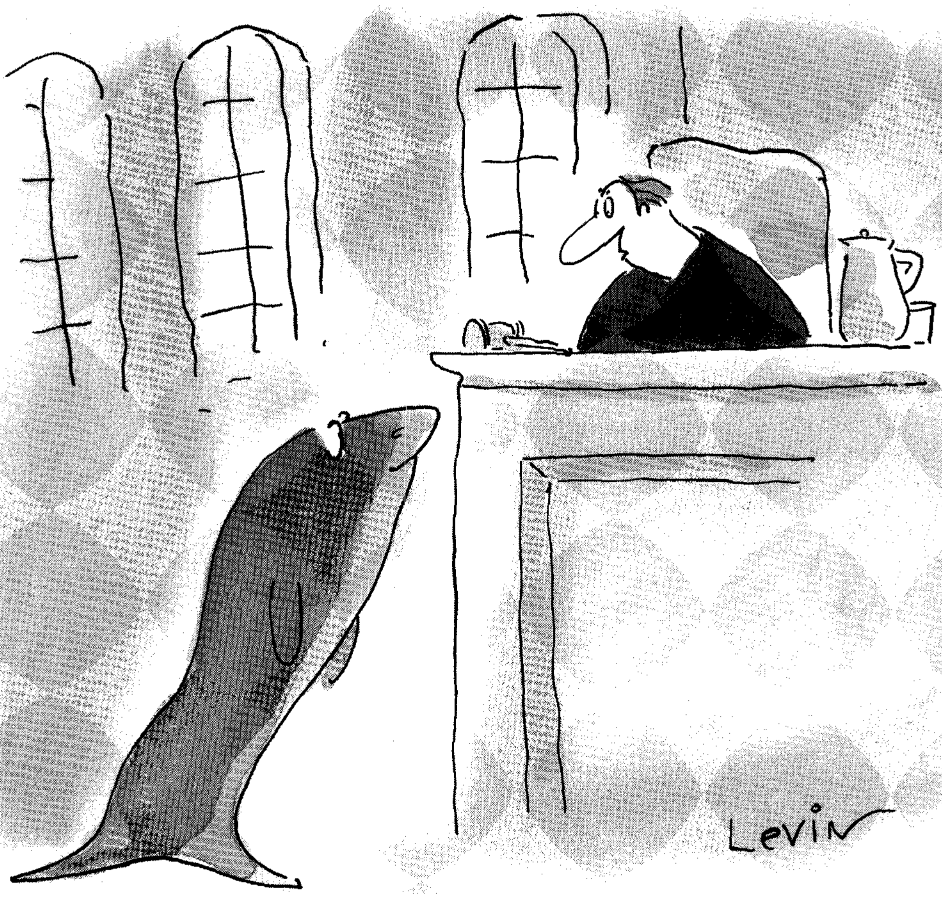


Throughout the house, glass is used for the orchestration of light.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

So Chareau stayed out in the country, playing with the Quonset-hut house. In New York, the bigger or more able or more ambitious architects of his generation all began to build in glass. The glass architecture that had been the expressive utopian-dream style of the first half of the century quickly became the corporate, official, inescapable style of the second half. Scheerbart's fantasies all came true, but nothing looked the way it was supposed to look. The glass buildings were not even transparent.

When the war was over, the Dalsaces, after a long, clandestine voyage throughout France during the Occupation, managed to reëstablish their life in Paris. But Paris was a different place. The romance of Communism was finished there and, though Dr. Dalsace continued as a member of the editorial board of *Pensées*, the French Communist philosophical journal, he gradually retreated from the Party, leaving it for good in 1956, after Hungary. He devoted himself to family planning. (His writings on planned parenthood could be a little alarming—or, anyway, very "French." Toward the end of his life, he was the co-author of a little book about family planning, though the practice was still illegal in Catholic France. Trying to persuade his readers that birth control was a necessary thing, he avoided the Anglo-Saxon line that it made for a better society; instead, he ar-



"I'd like to let you go, Willy, but this is your third offense."

gued that it made for better sex. "In a union contracted by true love, the real danger is monotony, and the boredom that can result," he wrote. "It is easier to be a lover than a husband. . . . Monotony must be avoided *at all costs*. . . . That is the psychosexual justification of some sort of regulation of births.") Annie died in 1968, and Jean two years later.

Chareau died in East Hampton in April of 1950, and it would not be entirely romantic to say that he died of a broken heart. "He came over every morning for breakfast," Ileana Sonnabend told me once, "And we always expected him. He had built a little house, one room, on the Motherwell grounds, and he loved it. One morning, we waited and waited. And he did not come. Leo went across the street, and found him there. He had no phone, though it wouldn't have mattered if he had. He had a stroke. I cried and cried. He was such a spiritual presence." In a letter to Annie Dalsace, he had written, at the end, "Say that I fought like a lion for your house. For your house I keep the first beating of my heart." The Motherwell house survived, in a diminished condition, until the boom of the mid-eighties, when it was bought by an East Hampton entrepreneur and put up for sale—derisively, for a dollar, to anyone who would restore it. No one wanted it, and in 1985 it was destroyed.

The architects and architectural historians who rediscovered Chareau in the nineteen-sixties loved the Maison de Verre because it was one of the few modern buildings to value function and fantasy equally, without succumbing to the lure of historical pastiche—"the one isolated poetic interpretation of the pure glass and steel aesthetic," the British architect Richard Rogers, who was, with Kenneth Frampton, one of the key rediscoverers of the Glass House, has written.

"I saw the house for the first time in '56," Rogers, whose Pompidou Center, in Paris, displays the influence of the Maison de Verre, recalled recently. "I was knocked sideways. At the time, there was the classical tradition of Mies and the romantic, organic tradition of Frank Wright. That's what was available. This was neither—it was a tone poem about what you could do with glass and steel. It gave the idea of a modular house, too. Of course, it isn't a modular home itself. It's a handcrafted one-off if ever there was one. That space between what it seems to be and what it is is probably part of the mystique of the house. The house gives the impression, as you approach it, of being infinitely expandable. The façade is as big as anything could be, though in fact it's a small house. But it's not articulated as a façade—there isn't any sense of how large or small it *could* be. It seems to have a poetic idea of the module in it: you could expand it endlessly—mass-produce it. Of course, it was handmade, and one knew that—had to keep reminding oneself of that—but the idea seemed so powerful.

"Eventually I got to know the Dalsaces—they were lovely and wonderful to me—and became close to Marc. And then, later, Roo, our son, was delivered by Pierre Vellay. We got the address of an obstetrician and I was startled—it was the Glass House. When my wife and I went in, all I could concentrate on was the detailing in the office. The Glass House has affected everything I've done. Look around here." He waved a hand around the living room of his London town house. There is a blue girder standing upright in the middle of the room—an obvious homage to the girders in the Glass House. "All I need in here is the bookshelves and the piano, and I guess I have it."

Rogers' recollection of his discovery of the house in the fifties reminded me that a small postmodernist movement preceded the big one. Though that first postmodernism, which began in the fifties and ran up through the early sixties, involved a rejection of the big, official modern styles, it was, in its way, at least as romantic as the original modern taste had been. It wanted to restore a lost vitality and poetic reach. But romantic postmodernism required constant new infusions of faith; ironic postmodernism required only cynicism, which has been in late-twentieth-century culture the one self-renewing resource.

The rediscovery of the Glass House was a minor event in the history of that early, failed postmodernism. Yet, oddly, the cult of the house persists. This is probably because, though it is easy to *think* ironically, it is very hard to *live* that way. Beneath the accepted, official academic stream of postmodern thought, there remains a little stream devoted to things that are self-consciously artificial without being particularly ironic, and this taste devotes itself, above all, to houses and to décor. The revivals of certain houses in the past twenty years—the Tugendhat house of Mies, Wright's Fallingwater—are in part reflections of that taste, which is not hopeful, exactly, but suggests a nostalgia for hope.

More than any other, the Glass House fills the bill. It is lovely rather than bold, feminine rather than masculine; it is entirely modern without being part of modernism, and witty without being ironic. The ship's ladder that seals off the bedroom would have been far too frivolous a device for serious modernist design but far too ingenuous for postmodern. It is not an allusion to a ship's ladder; it *is* a ship's ladder. You can pull it up behind you when you go to bed.

ONE morning in June of last year, my wife and I went, at last, to live in the Glass House. We got out of the cab, punched the code on the little electronic keypad by the gate to the courtyard, and I dragged our bags across the cobblestones and up to the door of the Glass House.

Our invitation to live in the house had come about, after much hoping and scheming, with ridiculous simplicity. Three years before, we had gone back to Paris for Thanksgiving, and had been invited to have dinner with Aline and Pierre Vellay in their apartment, above the house. I walked up the stairs, and, fumbling for the doorbell, flicked a switch just to the left of the door.

A blaze of light appeared—so bright and so sudden that it seemed audible, as loud as an explosion. The house was suddenly alight; all the floodlights on the ladders had come on. I felt at first as if I had accidentally pressed the launch button on a missile and then, just as quickly, I felt disappointed: *So there's no more to it than that.* The floodlights are on a switch, and the switch is by the door. When you want to illuminate the house, you do not consult a calendar or a ritual, or even an electrician. You just turn it on, and then (I quickly did this, too) turn it off. You could do it naturally, as part of the flow of life; it's no different from turning your own bathroom light on and off in the middle of the night.

We were leaving for New York the next day, and I made my thanks and talked about the house.

"Come and live in it," Dr. Vellay said abruptly.

"Oh, well . . ." we said.

"No," he said. "The next time you're in Paris, stay in the house. It's the simplest thing in the world. You love the house. Why not live in it? It would be good for you." And then he added, "*C'est comme chez vous.*"

Now we were back and on the threshold. Dominique had told us that someone might be inside, so we should ring. We did, and at last a young woman appeared.

"Oh," she said, with less enthusiasm than I had ever before heard in a human voice. "You are the Americans."

She gave us the key to the Glass House, which turned out to be a goofy-looking two-toothed cylinder—like a skate key—with a fat blue-and-white acrylic pompom on its chain.

We carried our bags upstairs and into the master bedroom—Jean and Annie's room, the one that could be entered either from the mezzanine or by the little ship's ladder. Our luggage looked wildly out of place, as though it had come from another dimension, through a time warp. There was a curved burled-wood bed, under a coffee-brown cover; a series of cabinets, built in, which were also of honey-colored burled wood and had a curving, oceanic front; a rug with a zigzag pattern; a night table; glassed-in bookshelves over our heads. A passageway led into the bathroom; Martha put her soap next to one basin, and I put my razor next to the other.

For a few hours, that first day, we were entranced by the details of everything we saw: we would lie on the bed, on the settee, on the daybed, and look—luxuriate in the act of looking. One wall of our room—the wall that faced the garden—was a wonder of materials, laid out one against another like an architectural pousse-café: glass on top, then red painted metal, then a larger band of glass, and then copper sheathing.

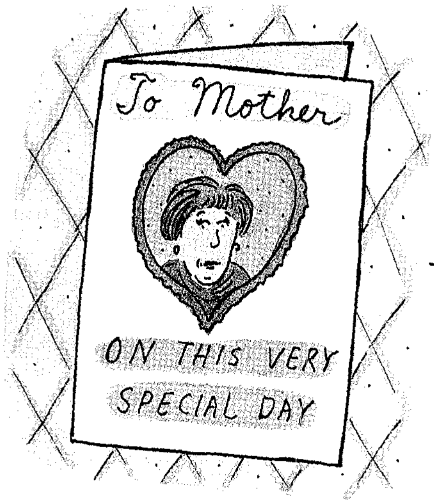
But we quickly discovered that the

"*My printer's down.*"

INTRODUCING...

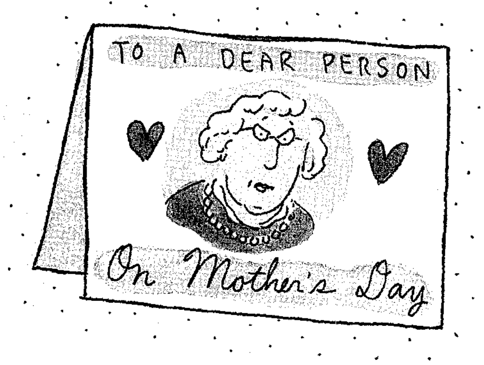
Healing Truths

MOTHER'S DAY CARDS


To Mother
ON THIS VERY SPECIAL DAY

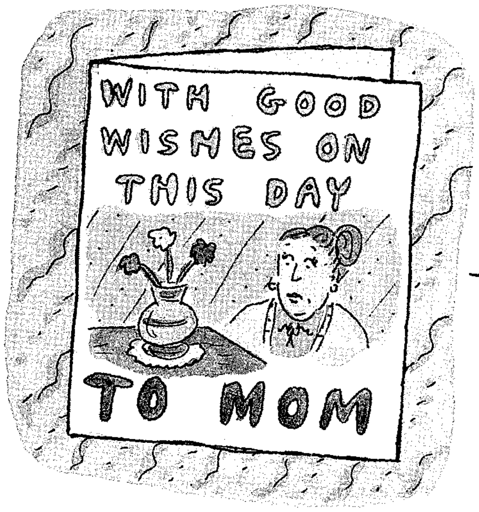
You knew I wanted Barbie®,
The world's most perfect teen.
Instead, you chose to buy me
A generic figurine.

Thanks for saving three dollars.


TO A DEAR PERSON
On Mother's Day

You did the best with the skills you had.
Considering everything, you weren't so bad.

I'll try not to repeat your mistakes.


WITH GOOD WISHES ON THIS DAY
TO MOM

Your house is always clean and neat,
Your lemon poundcake can't be beat.
Self-negating mom and wife,
It's not too late to get a life.

Only trying to help.

R. Chast

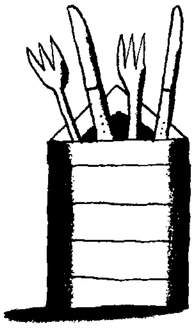
freedom that people had always admired in the house—its capacity for infinite change—was largely symbolic. The sliding screens and moving doors and fanning-out tables—all the little fixtures of the house—express an ideal of change, fluidity, and mobility instead of actually *providing* it. The Glass House is like a poem, and, like any poem, it presents a universe of possible readings to the contemplative mind while remaining fixed, structured, and essentially inalterable—change a word and you've ruined the effect. Every day in the house, we would, earnestly, Americanly, try to "experience" it—extend our knowledge, our understanding, of it from that of the day-tripper to that of the inhabitant. But it turned out that all you could really do was change places. You could settle in this chair and then in that chair, and then get up and go to a different room. "This isn't living," Martha said at one point. "This is *sitting*."

Often, we found ourselves being forced back into the styles of life as it had been led when the Glass House was built. The house dictates a life. After two days of vague disquiet at breakfast, I actually went to Galeries Lafayette and bought a burgundy silk robe with tiny white dots.

But if the house dictates a life, it also makes one aware of life *as* life—a force that can only be temporarily enclosed by any house. We had arrived with notebooks, intending to document our week in the Glass House in Biosphere 2 fashion. But the house seemed to slip away from us, and life asserted itself. Laundry became a major theme of our week in the house. We spent a day schlepping our bagful of dirty clothes around the Boulevard Saint-Germain. What had Jean and Annie done? Given it to the servants, probably—but then where had the servants gone? Or had Jean done the laundry himself, Communistically, carrying a big white bag down to a Zola-style *bassin* in a working-class arrondissement? Finally, we found a laundromat—a Lavo-Club, on the Rue de Seine—and sat there and read *Allo!* with all the Algerian *gardiens* of the neighborhood.

Plumbing became another theme: the *meaning* of the house immediately shifted from the library and bedroom to the bathroom and kitchen. For one thing, we had to share them. We soon found out who the young woman was who had let us in, and called us "the Americans." It turned out that one of the Vellay nephews had come to town to study for one of the sets of examinations that are the eternal rites of middle-class life in France, and the young woman was his girlfriend. Sometimes other friends would visit them in the servants' quarters, over behind the kitchen. They played records, and left wine bottles behind.

We shared the kitchen with them and, all night long, listened to them enjoying themselves in the servants' quarters. At first, we resented them, and then pretty soon we envied them. They were not "living in the house"; they were just living. We smelled cigarette smoke and heard laughter. In the mornings, we would come down into the kitchen for breakfast and see the books that the French students were reading. They were mostly books about New York, the kind of studied, hardboiled American fiction that the French love: Jerome Charyn, Paul Auster, Charles Bukowski. I picked up "American Psycho"—it was a big favorite in France then—and read the blurb. "At night, he leads the typical life of the New York Yuppie," it read in French. "The lines of coke, the clubs, the significant depravity . . ."



Martha and I had the big bathroom to ourselves, but we all shared the toilet, which was the only working one in the house. It was in a kind of D.M.Z. on the mezzanine, between the kitchen and our bedroom. Books and magazines piled up there. We left copies of *Le Monde;* they left copies of *bandes dessinées:* old Marvel comics translated into French—the X-Men, the Avengers. Desperate for something lowbrow to read, I would sneak them back into the bedroom. In "X-Men," I read bits and pieces about a mythologized New York that was obviously as dear to the French students' hearts as our imaginary Saint-Germain was to ours. I saw Professor Charles Xavier, up at Columbia, with Low Library behind him (in film-noir chiaroscuro), about to leave for his "*hermitage de Westchester*": "*Certes, j'aime enseigner aux X-Men et aux Nouveaux Mutants. . . . Mais leur mode de vie, la spécificité de leurs besoins! . . . Ici, au moins, mes responsabilités sonts moindres.*" ("Certainly I like to teach the X-Men and the New Mutants. But their life style, the specificity of their needs! . . . Here, at least, my responsibilities are reduced.") The New York present seemed as available to them as the Parisian past had seemed to us.

The façade of the house was always dark. Dominique had asked us not to turn on the floodlights, because they might disturb her parents. Sometimes, as we entered the darkened house, we would hear the sound of the toilet roaring throughout—from the doctor's office to the top of the library. With all its hard surfaces, glass and metal, the Glass House conducts sound like an amplifier. The simple, familiar sound of rushing water would echo around the steel girders, bounce from hard glass brick to hard glass brick, strike the old matting, and resonate back up to the punched-metal balcony, as loud and reverberant and alarming as a tidal wave striking a rockbound coast. It seemed to pick up the Glass House by the nape, and shake it for a minute. Then the sound would subside—gurgle, like a big animal that has just had dinner—and we would tiptoe up to our room. You enter culture, but you just sneak home.

ONE rainy afternoon while we were living in the house, I walked all the way up to the Place Pigalle—at the other, north end of Paris—in order to visit Madeleine Milhaud, the widow of the composer Darius. She is in her nineties, and one of the last of the circle who shared the Glass House with the Dalsaces. I had been saving my visit to her for last, and I hoped that she could make me see what the house had been like in its prime.

As for her house, it wasn't hard to find. There was a plaque outside: "In this house lived the composer Darius Milhaud." Mme. Milhaud turned out to be a small, perfectly poised elderly woman, with the kind of unnaturally pink and youngish skin that the very old sometimes have.

She spoke in English, and her manner was formal. "Our friendship with Annie and Jean Dalsace was not touched by snobbism," she said. "We knew both the Chareaus and the Dalsaces. Dollie

Chareau had a great influence on Annie. She helped her develop a taste for modern painting But there is no influence without inclination.

"You find the house humane? Rather cold, in fact. Let's be frank. Let's be candid with each other. It's not a house at all, but a sort of machine. Do you recall that elevator that rose from the kitchen?" She was referring to a dumbwaiter, which had been out of order all the time we were in the house. "It *never* worked—the cook was always running after it with the salt. I was quite amused by the idea. There was no comfort in the house. That frightening staircase! I was always sure I would fall. Let's be frank. It is true, of course, that our tastes change about art. I recall the first time I saw Bernhardt. I thought that she was sublime." She pronounced the word in the French manner: "sue-bleem." "I wished to be an actress myself, and imitate her. Her way of singing, chanting, the words. I saw her again a few years later, and I thought, She has no psychology! No inner understanding, no variation! She disgusted me. So, you see, to ask what we thought about the house is simply to offer a bit of our memoirs, no more. Perhaps I will find the house humane sometime in the future.

"What can I tell you about Jean and Annie? Let's be frank. Politics and medicine were Jean's concern. He fought for the first transfusions of blood. Her father was a self-made Jewish man who came from Lorraine. They were real-estate people, who bought land and became prosperous. Annie's father was an extraordinarily simple man, honest and straightforward. Annie was sophisticated, bashful, and didn't communicate easily. There were two schools of childbirth then, you know. The bourgeois right took the English fashion, and the left followed the Russian school.

"Milhaud and I lived in the house, too, you see." (It is a sign of respect in France for even the intimates of great men to refer to them by their last names.) "In '47, we came back and stayed with the Dalsaces. I was always frightened of being locked into one of those black cupboards! Annie came to meet us at the boat—she would have come to meet any of the painters and writers that they cared for. The house was never empty then, and it must never be empty now. A concert was held there for Milhaud's centenary, in September, 1992. No one should have been back in Paris, but everyone came. I thought it was very touching—a friendly evening. People were there who were daughters of friends. Honegger's daughter, the children of Les Six. All those people who were concerned with Milhaud. The Glass House for me is a symbol of friendship, and friendship is life."

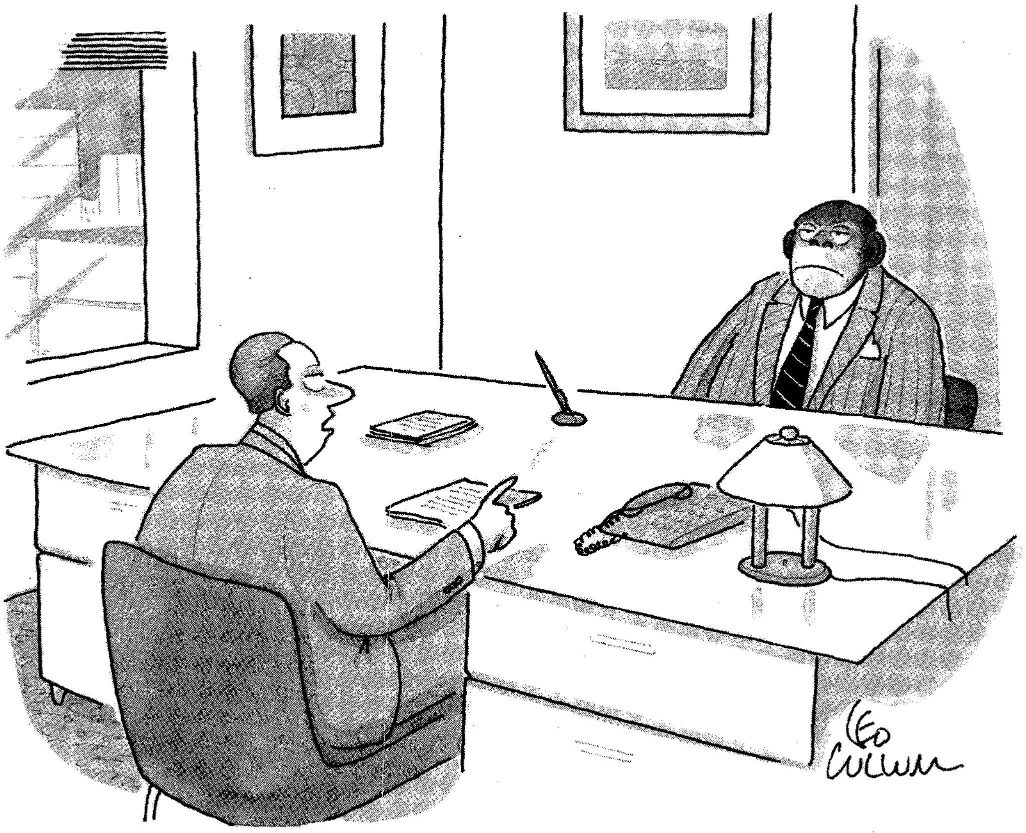
The phone rang, and Mme. Milhaud began a long, guarded, formal conversation, in French, about a forthcoming concert: "What is the date? At what time will your concert be held? . . . What is the program? . . . Well, I will try to be there. . . . Yes. Very good."

I assumed that someone was arranging a Milhaud concert, and I asked her what ensemble would be playing.

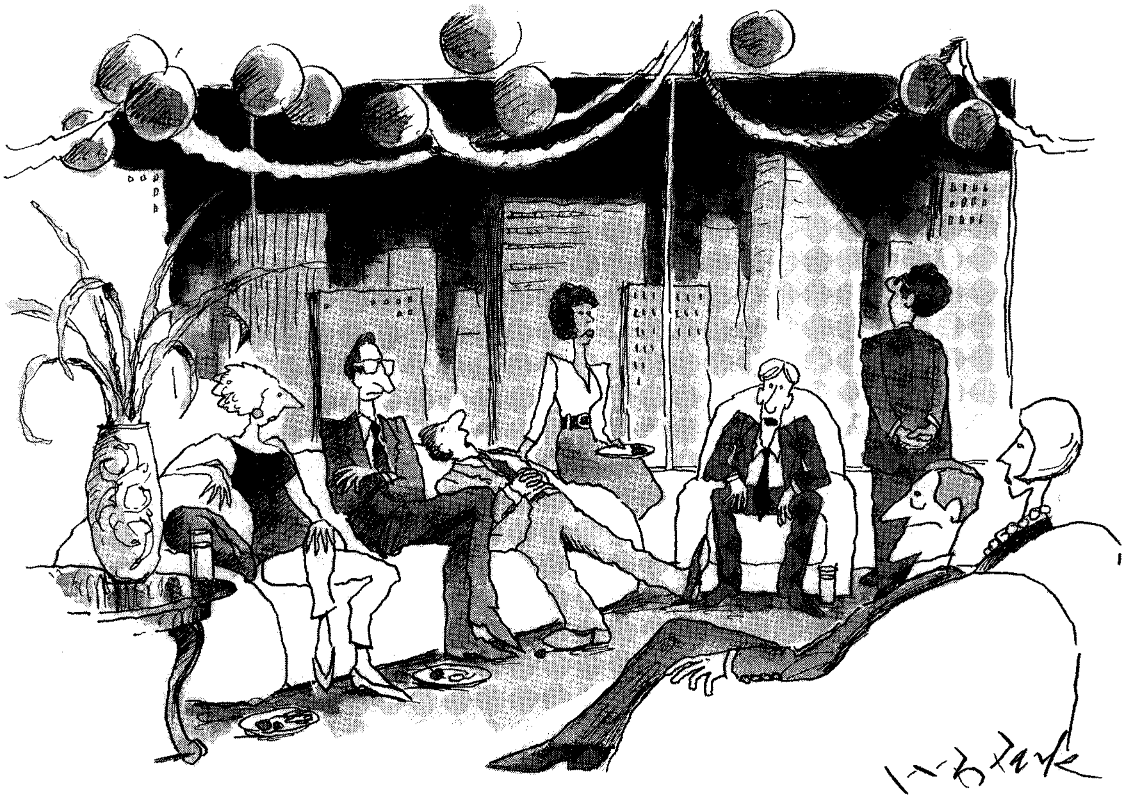
She shook her head. "No, no, no. That was my granddaughter. She wishes me to attend her recital." She paused. "I have discovered, in the course of a long life . . ." She paused again, as if to collect herself. "I have discovered, in the course of a long life, that there is nothing more demanding than a small child with a flute."

ON our last night in the house, I went down, alone, into the library and gazed at all the books. They seemed to have been left untouched since Jean Dalsace died. I climbed the ladder and picked out a first edition of the first French translation of "Ulysses." I opened to the first page. "*Majestueux et dodu, Buck Mulligan . . .*" Then I turned to the last page, Molly Bloom speaking French: "*Pour qu'il sente mes seins tout parfumés oui et son coeur battait comme fou et oui j'ai dit oui je veux bien Oui.*"

Finally, after a week of resisting temptation, I walked over to the switch, and turned on the outside floodlights. Everything came alive again. It was another house—brilliant, full of light, waiting for something to happen. It was so lovely, so inviting, that I wondered, in frustration, why, like so many people who had tried to live in the house since the first couple left, we had been defeated by it. We had failed, I thought, angrily, because we hadn't tried hard enough. We should have stayed up all night long, sat in the library, and planned our lives. Why did we step outside the house even for a



"You've had enough 'monkey see,' Edwards. We want some 'monkey do.'"



"Remember when everyone used to get drunk at parties?"

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moment? But then I thought of our long walks back to the house from dinner, and of how one night, on our way back from Le Voltaire, I had said that I regretted that we had not always stayed put, and Martha had said, "You know, I won't be sorry to see the last of the Glass House." We had both laughed, in relief at speaking the unspeakable. It wasn't that it was less than we had expected. It was just that you couldn't inhabit the house, really. You could only *re*-inhabit it, and we had been too American, or too lacking in confidence and largeness of spirit, to pull it off—too small for the parts. And, as I said those words to myself, *too small for the parts*, I suddenly understood, in a moment, that that was it—that the Glass House was not architecture, or interior decoration, or a boat or a barracks, or any of the other things it had been said to be.

I called Martha out to the mezzanine. "Look," I said, waving toward the light.

"Oh!" she said at once. "We're onstage."

It was a *theatre*. The house, I realized, was a piece of stage design. Chareau, groping to make a new kind of house, had turned unconsciously to the thing he knew—the one kind of building he had actually helped construct. The bandbox theatres of the Boulevards were the real ghosts of the Glass House. The house had a downstairs lobby and a great playing space in the center—the library—with dressing rooms leading to it, and balconies for the spectators overlooking it.

Chareau believed that to build a house was to change the world—that to put on a show was to change the possibilities of life. If we changed our hats, he thought, our hearts would follow. The reduction in scale of the dream of glass architecture over the preceding century—from the nineteenth-century public building to the twentieth-century home, from the Crystal Palace to the Glass House—was in a sense a sign of this belief: not a reduction, in fact, but a vast enlargement of faith in what a house could do.

There had probably never been a chance that the house could become a beacon, or a model, or a temple. "Moral exhibitionism" could not change life, because life is not an exhibition. The house's fate all along was to become exactly what it is—an empty theatre, a cult object. Still, a cult at least produces a credo; in fact, only a cult can produce a credo. Chareau's vision—that life can be lived in harmony, with the industrial and the sensual, pleasure and responsibility, domestic pleasure and public responsibility combined—survives, just as a vision. The fantasies can't change the facts—to think that they could was the modern fallacy. But the fantasies are themselves facts of another order. They count just by being there. The Glass House gives them an address in Paris.

THERE was a big Chareau exhibition at the Beaubourg last winter, which caused one more flurry of attention to the house and its makers: articles appeared in *Le Monde* and *Vogue* and *Metropolis* and *Elle Decor*. The cult has by now become so pervasive that it is losing a bit of its cultishness. The future of the house is still up in the air, though. An attempt has been made to interest some private collectors. So far, nothing has come of it.

When I think about the Glass House now, I think a lot about something that Mme. Milhaud told me. We were talking about the house, its strange past and uncertain future, and she said, "It is a difficult thing to have in your family a house of that fashion. I would oblige all architects to live in their own houses. The tyranny of their machinery!

"Let me tell you a story about the troubles of architecture. I knew a person once who was an investor in the Eiffel Tower. It was not a great success, financially. However, he had an illness that was diagnosed as whooping cough. He hated to go to the mountains, so he went to the third floor of the Eiffel Tower to live, and recovered his health." She paused, and then she explained, "So, you see, it turned out to be an excellent investment after all. The fate of marvels is complicated." ♦

POSTSCRIPT

NIXON, MINE HOST

When Richard Nixon was cultivating his role as elder statesman in the post-Watergate wilderness years, the dinner party became his preferred mode of détente.

BY MICHAEL KORDA

I SUPPOSE you could say that I'm inured to famous people, having grown up in a family full of them. Still, no one is completely immune to a certain kind of celebrity—not even celebrities themselves. The only time I ever saw de Gaulle close up, I had to keep pinching myself to be convinced that it really *was* the General. I felt the kind of awe that one is supposed to experience at one's first sight of the Grand Canyon or the Taj Mahal. All the same, he was just as I had expected him to be—immense, remote, austere.

Richard Nixon was different. First of all, he had always fascinated me—as he did almost everybody—in a strange and inexplicable way. Far from being remote, like de Gaulle, Nixon was a familiar presence in our lives for so long that he seemed like a member of the family. Way back in the fifties, I remember, dinner parties were being ruined by arguments when the subject of Nixon came up. Then, too, his triumphs and tragedies, his repeated rise and fall, his reputation for odd behavior, the contrast between his noble rhetoric and the public moments of mean-spiritedness, and, above all, his apparent view of himself as a kind of latter-day Prometheus, and the echo of failed greatness surrounding his political life, always made him the most authentically Shakespearean of American Presidents.

"You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore," he told the press bitterly after his defeat in the California gubernatorial election of 1962, but he was wrong: we *always* had Richard Nixon to kick around—even in exile and apparent disgrace (it was never perceived that way by Nixon), he remained part of our national consciousness, controversial even in forced retirement from the political scene.

I first met Nixon in the early nineteen-eighties, at a luncheon at his town house in New York, and my initial reaction on seeing him was how much taller he was than I had expected. For some reason, Nixon had always seemed to me *small*, but he was a good six feet tall, with the shoulders and the bulk of an athlete, and the brief, firm handshake of the professional politician. Cutting a formal, Presidential figure even in his own home, he wore a beautifully cut dark-blue suit, a white shirt, a sober tie. At close quarters—and the dining room in his Manhattan town house was so small that we were at very close quarters—he was a formidable presence, made more formidable for me by the simple fact that it undoubtedly *was* Nixon, the real thing, who was vigorously shaking my hand.

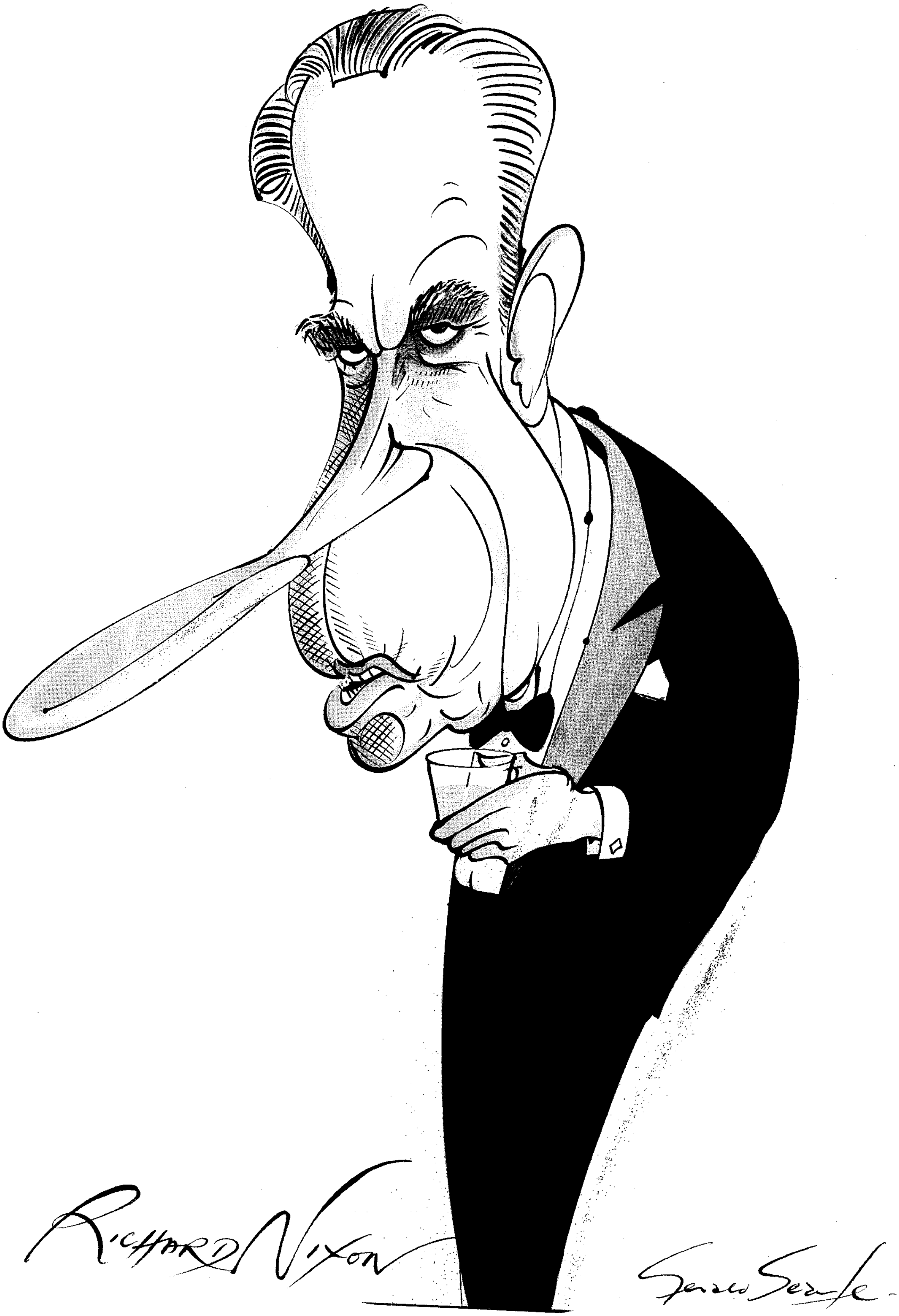
Most striking of all was his voice: a deep, rumbling basso profundo, rather like an avalanche in the distance, it was pitched an octave or two below even Henry Kissinger's. Nixon's voice was far warmer, deeper, and more human than it had sounded on television. Television did him no favors—and, in the end, this was perhaps his major political tragedy. His complexion, which seemed sallow on the screen, was in fact healthy and deeply tanned, and the scowl and the famous five-o'clock shadow were hardly noticeable.

The reason for my invitation was that I was Julie Nixon Eisenhower's editor—encouraged by Irving Lazar, she had written a book on famous people she had known who had "made a difference"—and she felt that it would be appropriate to introduce me to her parents. Nixon was at the time in what amounted to exile in New York, beginning to build up his reputation as an elder statesman, foreign-policy guru, and political wise man in the long aftermath of his resignation. People reported sighting him from time to time at this restaurant or that. He was by no means in hiding, but there was still something mysterious and faintly unconvincing about his pose as an ordinary New Yorker, and not just because the bottom floor of the Nixons' house was full of Secret Service agents and their bulky communications equipment.

New York was Nelson Rockefeller territory, a place full of Democrats and liberal Republicans, who, if they agreed on nothing else, agreed on their dislike of Nixon. In a city where great wealth, family and social connections, and glamour were what mattered, Nixon was not wealthy, socially connected, or glamorous, and, with his famous need to control events, he didn't seem altogether at ease in the chaotic, uncontrollable big city, any more than Mrs. Nixon did. They remained Californians—small-town Californians at that—who had ended up in New York only because they had been obliged to leave Washington, and they still guarded, decades after the event, a bitter memory of Nixon's rejection at the hands of the California voters. New York was their Saint Helena. Nixon's tan, Mrs. Nixon's stiff hairdo, the finger bowls on the table all seemed somehow un-New Yorkish, as did the decoration of the house, which was startlingly Oriental.

A taste for the Oriental in home décor is very Californian, but the Nixons seemed to have been carried away by it. Most of the art, the furniture, and the rugs were Chinese, or of Chinese inspiration; so, for that mat-

GERALD SCARFE


Richard Nixon
Gerald Scarfe

ter, were the servants and the food. I fantasized briefly that Nixon might have been a real-life Manchurian Candidate—which would certainly have explained his conversion from ally of the anti-Communist China Lobby to architect of rapprochement between Washington and Beijing. Were the servants, I wondered, in fact his controllers? Had his Presidency been a carefully orchestrated Chinese plot?

Nixon had been delayed downstairs by some business, so that Mrs. Nixon, Julie, and I were seated when he arrived in the dining room. I stood while Julie introduced us, and we shook hands. I fear that I stared at him rudely. There is a theory that great men have large heads and prominent features—think of de Gaulle and his nose, L.B.J. and his ears, F.D.R. and his jaw—and by this standard, if no other, Nixon had reached greatness. His head was enormous, his jowls and ski-jump nose were just as cartoonists had always portrayed them, his eyes dark and penetrating. "Welcome," he said, rather formally. "Nice to see you."

I mumbled something appropriate and sat down, and observed, to my astonishment, that Nixon went to the other end of the table, took Mrs. Nixon's hand, and said, "Nice to see you," in exactly the same tone of voice, then sat down, unfolded his napkin, and addressed himself to his soup.

I thought about this a lot at the time. I didn't doubt that Nixon and Mrs. Nixon were close, but he seemed to have some difficulty about revealing the fact in front of a stranger. On the other hand, I thought I saw a look of pain in Mrs. Nixon's eyes, which made me wonder if Nixon had really noticed that she was there. I remembered my friend John Ehrlichman's telling me that he had once suggested to Nixon, early in the 1968 Presidential campaign, that it would be a nice idea if Nixon and Mrs. Nixon could hold hands as they walked down the steps of the campaign plane on arriving somewhere. Nixon, he reported, fixed him with a darkly fishy stare and said flatly, "We don't do that."

Years passed, and I did not see Nixon again. Then, by one of those bizarre twists of fate so common in book publishing, I became not only Julie's publisher and editor but Nixon's, despite the fact that Simon & Schuster, where I worked, had played its part in his downfall by publishing "All the President's Men" and "The Final Days," and that my own authors included John Ehrlichman and John Mitchell, both of whom had gone to prison because of their roles in Watergate and had had unkind things to say about their former boss. But even in our author-editor relationship Nixon remained an elusive, enigmatic presence. One did not telephone him—one telephoned a member of his staff, who passed the question on to the President (as he was always called), then called back with an answer. It was made clear that under no circumstances would there be direct communication: a hangover, no doubt, from the White House days, when nobody was allowed to see the President with news that he did not want to hear—or, at any rate, that Haldeman and Ehrlichman didn't want him to hear. (Later on, when I published Ronald Reagan, I was surprised by the contrast. Reagan not only *liked* getting telephone calls but called himself, at odd hours, and I often had to wait while he and my wife discussed their horses or exchanged information about pig breeding, an interest they shared.)

I had not expected that Nixon would take well to editing, but he did, albeit indirectly. No prima donna, he accepted editorial advice with good grace and turned out, unsurprisingly, to be very sophisticated about the publishing process. When it came to book promotion, he approached that part of the process with all the enthusiasm of a born campaigner. He discounted the major reviewers, who he rightly assumed would write about his books from a liberal bias—"When they don't like a book," he wrote to me, quite correctly, about the editors of the *Times Book Review*, "they pick a reviewer that shares their prejudices"—and went after the big television news shows, where he could appeal to his public over the heads of the reviewers.

Strangely enough, the post-Presidential Nixon was as good on television as the old Nixon had been bad—perhaps because now he had nothing to hide. The role of elder statesman seemed to suit him better than the role of President. White House insiders had always complained of his uninterruptible monologues on foreign policy, but the

PROLOGUE

It is night,
my father is running.
My mother is gathering laundry,
sweeping across the yard
with long white arms.

We are moving.
Kneeling in the back seat,
I stare through the window.
Some man, wearing an old cap,
clutches a cane in front
of his barn. Then there is
wood by the road's edge,
crumbling to ash.

My mother sits on the lawn,
intent on the pocket
of her orange dress. My father,
sipping bourbon, berates us.
It will take all afternoon
to enter the doorway.

—SAMN STOCKWELL

monologues worked very well for him on the "Today" show or "Larry King Live," where his pronouncements were treated with awe. Television celebrities, being as easily impressed by former Presidents as ordinary mortals are, were unlikely to contradict him or ask tough questions. More important, television sold books.

The only problem in publishing Nixon came from Nixon's supporters. His loyalists, particularly in Orange County, California, where he was regarded in much the same light as Bonnie Prince Charlie used to be in Scotland, were apt to cruise the local bookstores to check if his books were properly displayed, or, God forbid, out of stock, and did not hesitate to complain directly to the head of Gulf + Western, then Simon & Schuster's corporate owner, often attributing any absence of books to liberal bias or to sabotage. After two or three books, however, publishing Nixon became a happy routine, with few slipups, even in Orange County, and it was perhaps for this reason that in August of 1989 I received an unexpected invitation to dine at the Nixons' house, in Saddle River, New Jersey. (He had long since abandoned Manhattan for the more friendly Republican suburbs.)

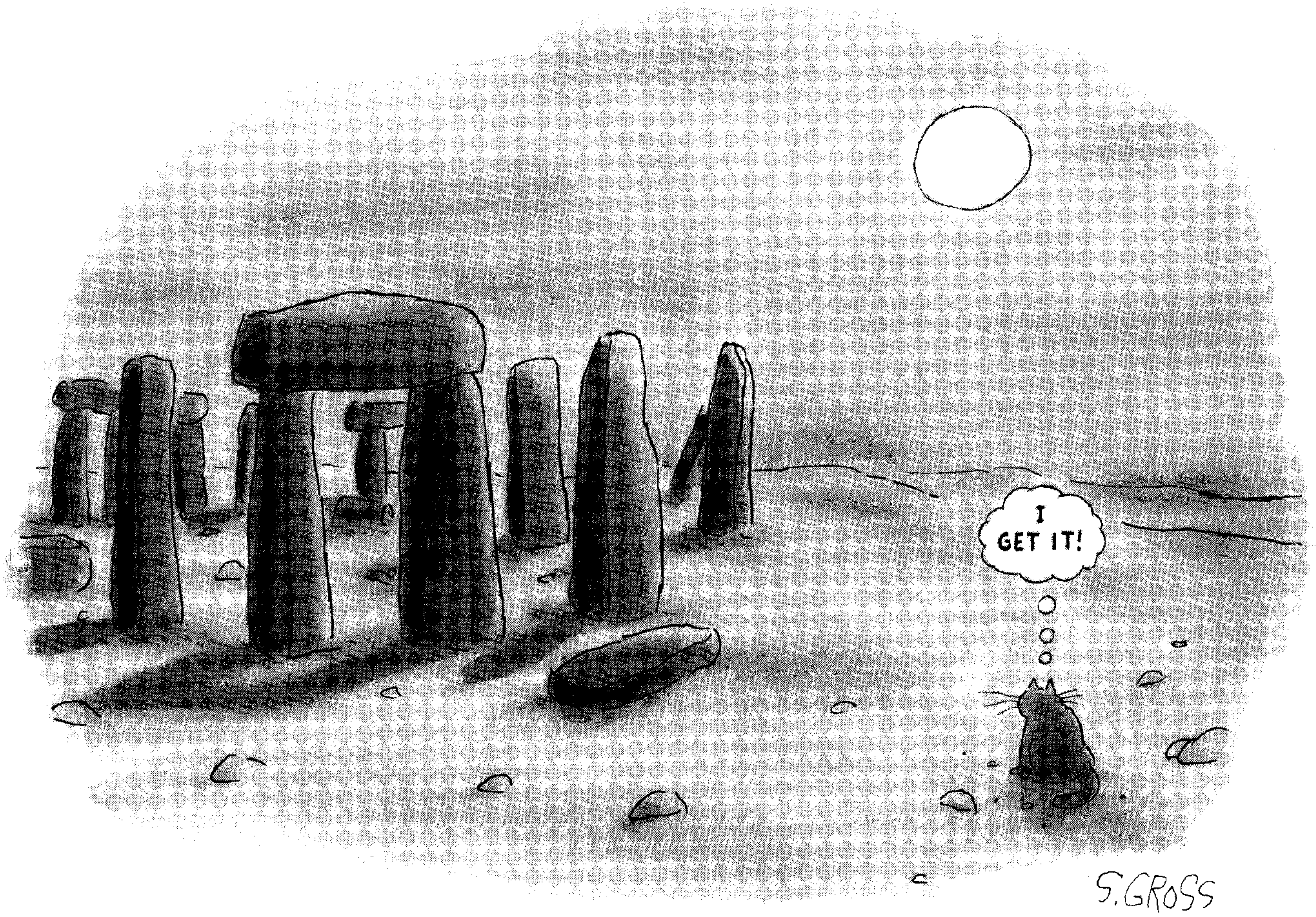
NIXON'S staff had presented me with careful instructions on how to reach the house, but had seemed a little puzzled that I was driving myself. I could see why the instructions were necessary. Within a mile or so of a New Jersey commercial strip full of mini-malls and service stations, Nixon's house was tucked away as secretly as Shangri-La: behind high, dense growths of trees and hedges, it was impossible for any casual intruder to find—rather like any number of culs-de-sac in Bel Air, but without palm trees. The courtyard was a blacktop space big enough for a good-sized motel.

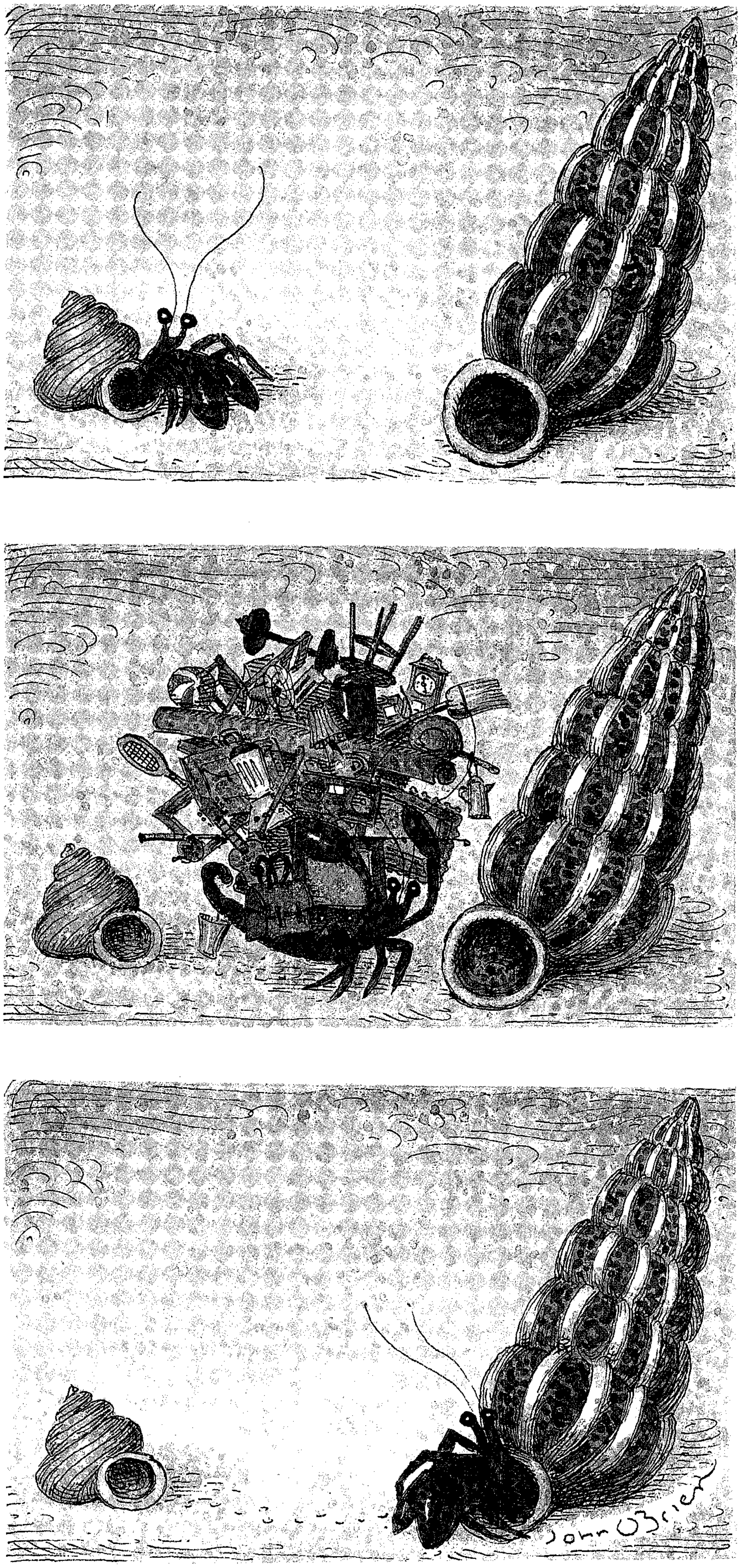
The puzzlement of Nixon's staff became clear as I pulled up before the entrance—a kind of California version of a porte cochère—in my silver Porsche. A row of limousines to one side made it evident that Nixon's guests tended to be driven by chauffeurs rather than to drive themselves, let alone in sports cars. The security people at the door seemed uncertain what to make of the car, though whether because it was frivolous or foreign I wasn't sure.

Inside, I found most of my fellow-guests milling about in the entrance hall, looking suitably solemn. The only one I recognized was Robert Abplanalp, a large, jovial-looking man who had been much in the limelight as a Nixon backer and personal friend during the Watergate days. He and Bebe Rebozo had appeared in the press as the ultimate Nixon loyalists, *plus royalistes que le roi.* There were three Chinese gentlemen present, one of them clearly the senior, and all had the bland, inscrutable faces of professional diplomats. There were no women present—it was to be a stag dinner.

Before we could introduce ourselves to one another, Nixon appeared at the top of the stairs—at exactly the moment we had been summoned for. He descended halfway, stretched out his arms just as he used to do when he was campaigning, and with a broad smile announced, "Gentlemen, the good news is—the bar is open."

We trooped into the living room and





sat down in a rough circle around Nixon, while the butler took our drink orders. As I was shortly to discover, drinks in the Nixon household were not to be taken—or even *held*—lightly. They were served in immense, heavy tumblers, and every time a guest took a sip Nixon, who had an eagle eye as a host, would attract the butler's attention and say, "You'd better freshen up Mr. X's drink." Like the ever replenished "Bottomless Cup of Coffee" that used to be the pride of Prexy's, the now defunct New York City hamburger chain, glasses at the Nixons' were impossible to empty.

In homage to Nixon, I had ordered one of his famous Daiquiris, made with almost no sugar, the recipe for which was said to be one of his more closely guarded secrets, and I can report that it lived up to expectations: the President's claim that he made the best Daiquiri ever was the truth.

What I was not prepared for was the odd formality that he imposed on himself and his guests. There was no conversation as such. One guest, Richard Solomon, who was then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, had just returned that day from Paris, where the Cambodian talks were going on. Nixon asked him to give us a report on the state of the negotiations, which he did, at some length, while we sat and listened. When he was through, Nixon gave us his views on the subject, during which absolute silence reigned, while the butler freshened up our drinks. Except for the drinks, it was rather like a tutorial. The three Chinese men—later introduced as Han Xu, the departing Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, who had been Chief of Protocol at the time of Nixon's visit there in 1972; Minister Zhao Qixin, from the Embassy; and Chen Mingming, the Ambassador's principal secretary, who translated for them—who were presumably accustomed to feigning interest at the interminable meetings of the Chinese Communist Party, gave these disquisitions their full, rapt attention, while most of the Americans gently slumbered, arms crossed in front of them, chins resting on their chests.

What kept my attention focussed was not the subject of Cambodia but the fact that Nixon was in the habit of referring to himself in the third person, something I had never heard anyone do before—not even members of the British Royal Family. "When Nixon was President . . ." he would say, in his deep, sonorous voice, his dark eyes flickering over his guests as if he expected one of us to challenge him. Even stranger, he often expanded his self-description, as in "when Nixon was President and Leader of the Free World," as if the latter were also an office to which he had been elected. It was as if Queen Elizabeth II, having abdicated the throne, had referred to herself in the third person as "the Queen and Defender of the Faith."

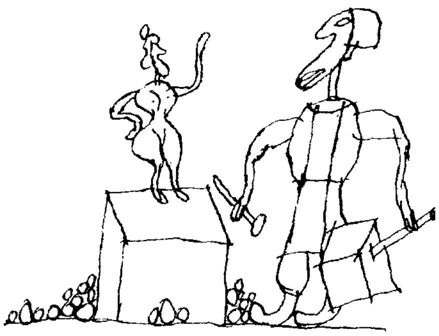
Roused by the announcement that dinner was ready, we filed into the dining room, where the first course proved to be a contribution from Abplanalp, who had branched out from manufacturer of aerosol valves for spray cans to entrepreneur of smoked fish—a kind of Gentile Barney Greengrass. While we ate our smoked tuna, smoked trout, and smoked salmon, the real purpose of the dinner became apparent. The massacre of the Chinese student protesters in Tiananmen Square had occurred only two months earlier, and Nixon was debating whether he should continue with his plans to revisit China. He was also deeply concerned that the reaction of "the liberal media" toward events in China might prejudice Chinese-American relations, on which he set great store as the major achievement of his foreign policy.

Han Xu had won Nixon's respect and friendship in 1972, and he was in a position to carry to the Chinese leaders an informal message that, despite the unfortunate events in Tiananmen Square, Nixon was still on their side. The role of the rest of us was, on the one hand, to flesh out the dinner party—surely orchestrated because a social occasion would be more palatable to Americans than a face-to-face meeting between Nixon and Han Xu—and, on the other, to provide a suitable audience of industrialists (Abplanalp, of the smoked fish, and Dwayne Andreas, C.E.O. of Archer Daniels Midland Company), high-level mandarins (Solomon and Robert Ellsworth, a former representative and Ambassador to NATO), and a media figure and/or intellectual (me).

A year or so later, when Nixon came to lunch at Simon & Schuster, his genial, good-natured aide, John Taylor, actually provided in advance a suitable list of questions for us to ask the former President. Each of us was allocated one question, to which Nixon then gave an articulate five-minute reply; to at least one editor's regret, though, Watergate was not on the list of suggested subjects. In his own home, Nixon followed much the same formula in reverse. He went around the table, introducing each of us in turn (when it came to my turn, the President chuckled wickedly and said, "He's a type we don't often get at this table, heh, heh—a New York intellectual!") and asking us to give a short summary of the state of our business or concern. He listened intently—nobody was a more intent listener than Nixon—and then, for the benefit of the Chinese, gave his own views on what we had said.

Needless to say, the Chinese were not there to hear about the book-publishing business, or about agricultural products, precision valves, or smoked fish. Ellsworth brought up the key question—the pièce de résistance, as it were—which was how America was reacting to Tiananmen Square and whether Nixon should go to Beijing.

The Chinese came to full attention at this. I could not help admiring the way Nixon had managed to get somebody else to raise the question—surely the three Chinese diplomats must have appreciated the subtlety of it, too—and the way he gave it careful scrutiny, as if it had caught him by surprise. Nixon, I seemed to remember, had done some acting at school and had put on amateur theatricals to amuse the troops when he was a naval officer in the Pacific; it occurred to me that if fate had called him to the stage instead of to the bar he would have made a fine actor. He knotted his brows and appeared to give the matter serious consideration. He believed, he said, that there was more to be gained by Nixon's going than not. *Some* people (he frowned darkly)—naysayers, parlor liberals, professional skeptics—would doubtless criticize Nixon. Nixon was used to that. It had never stopped Nixon in the past.



The Chinese nodded.

Great powers, the former President went on, could not allow their foreign policy to be determined by the scruples—he chuckled—"or prejudices" of the liberal media.

A deeper nod, with a hint of puzzlement, from the Chinese, for whom media scruples were surely not a problem.

The interests and the good relations of two such powers as China and the United States were more important than transitory events, Nixon continued, warming to his theme. Ordinary Americans, he affirmed solemnly, his voice lowering to a confidential pitch, had a better sense of what really mattered than the media did. Ordinary Americans liked and respected China, and were not dismayed by horror stories.

Nixon seemed to be distancing himself not only from the media but from the White House. He leaned closer to Han Xu, eager to explain to him the workings of the American mind. "When Nixon was President and Leader of the Free World," Nixon said, his voice rumbling, his eyes locked on Han Xu (who continued to eat methodically and with enthusiasm while the translator whispered in his ear), "we had troubles of our own here in the United States." He paused to let this sink in, while Han Xu's attention remained fixed on his plate. "We, too, had so-called student riots, protests, anarchy in the streets of Washington," Nixon said, just in case Han Xu was unfamiliar with the anti-war movement. "When you go home, you should tell your people that many of us understand." He paused dramatically. "When Nixon was President and Leader of the Free World, he found that *firmness paid.* You tell them that."

The words "firmness paid" were uttered with the full force of Nixonian emphasis, familiar to anyone who remembers his television appearances at such moments as the Cambodian incursion—the frown, the steely focus of the dark eyes, the outthrust jaw, the even deeper lowering of the voice, and the slow delivery, as if to say, "This is the important bit, so pay attention."

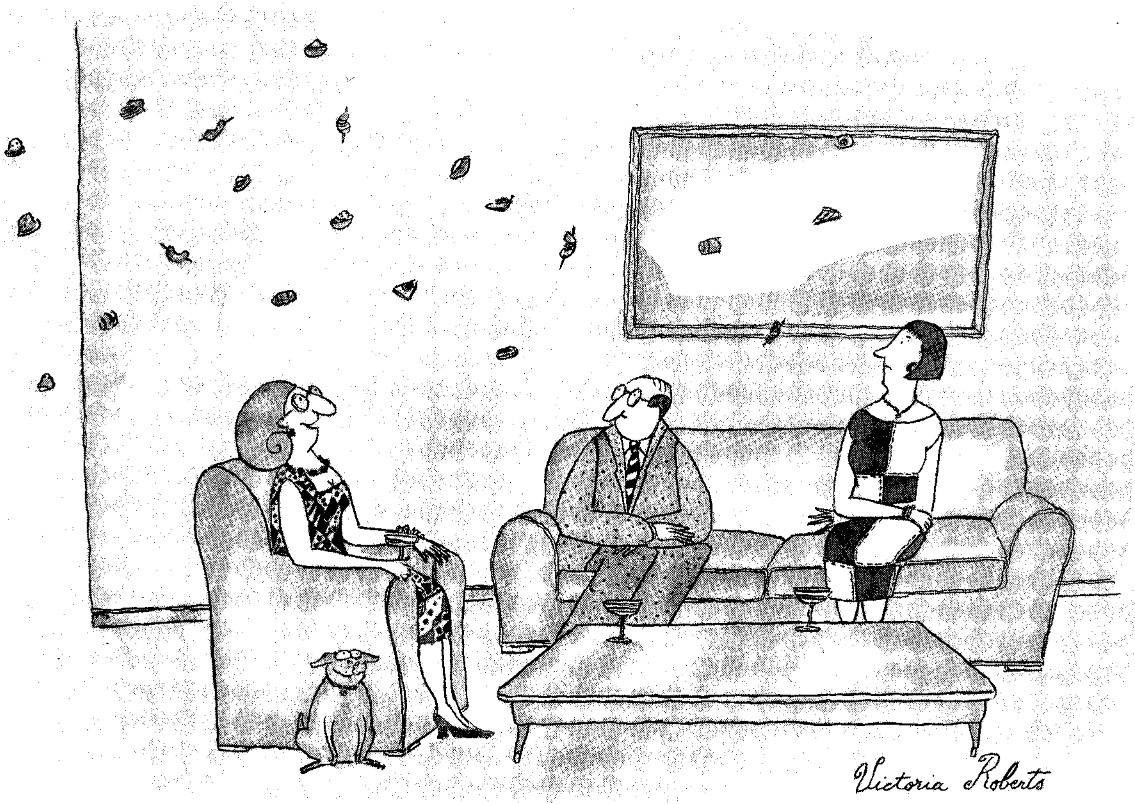
My fellow-guests nodded, apparently all in favor of firmness toward student demonstrators. The Chinese smiled, for the first time: firmness had so far been a hard sell for them in the United States—even in the Bush White House, where running over students with tanks was seen as, at the very least, poor P.R. for the Beijing regime. Han Xu finished what was on his plate, put his knife and fork down neatly, and raised his glass of red wine—a gift from the President of France, we had been informed—in a gesture of gratitude, not quite a toast but by no means casual, either. He whispered something to the translator. "He is grateful for the President's understanding," the translator said. "He will communicate it at home."

"Good," Nixon rumbled.

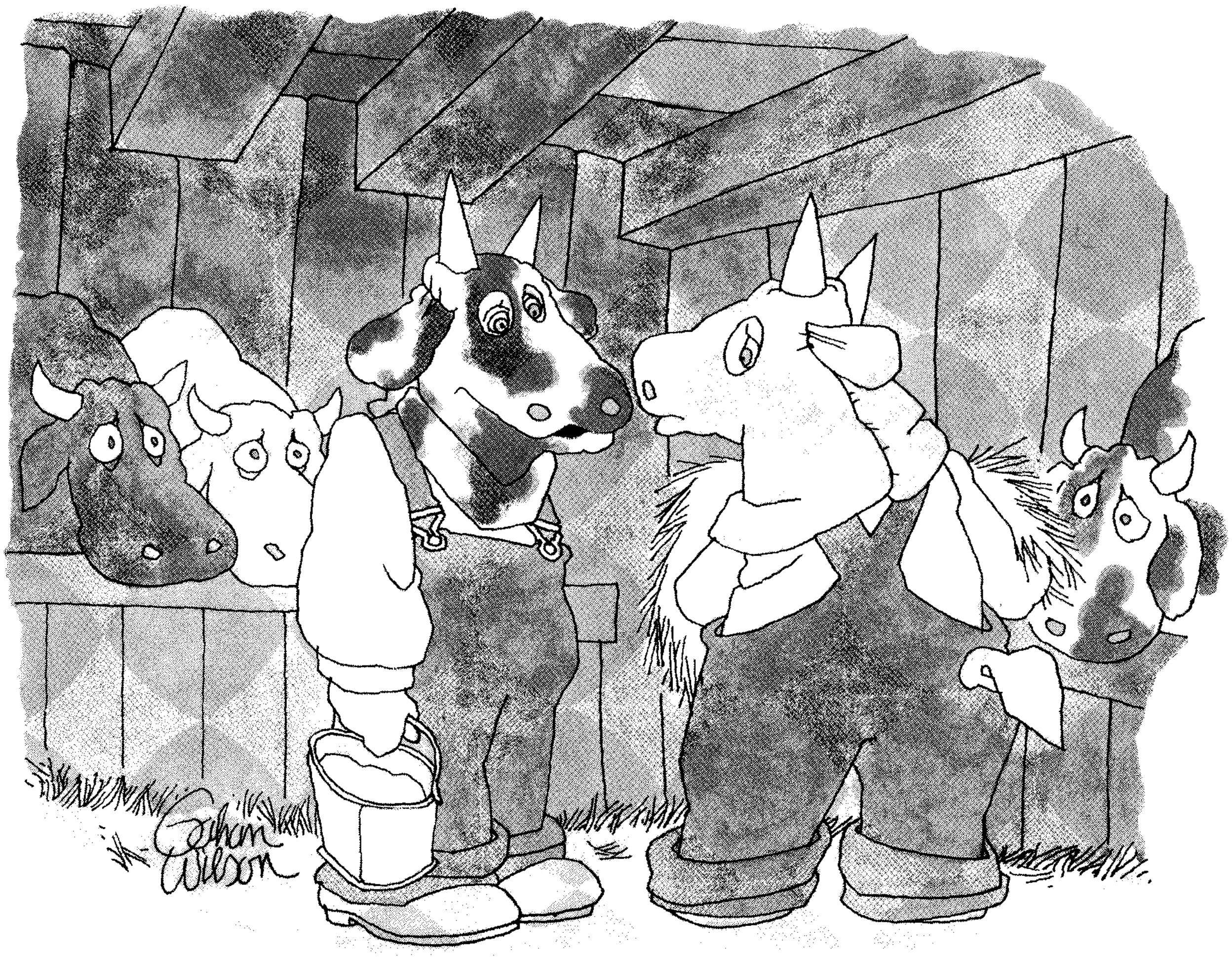
It occurred to me that part of the problem in current Sino-American relations might be that the Chinese had simply been listening to the wrong Americans over the years. Not unlike European explorers of Africa in the nineteenth century, who had stumbled into the uncharted interior and latched on to whatever self-proclaimed kings and chiefs they first met up with, without having the slightest idea of what these supposed authority figures might represent, what their real power might be, or what their people and their neighbors thought of them, the Chinese had been "opened up" by Nixon, and accepted him blindly as representing American hearts and minds. Just as the English in Africa had backed native rulers long after it should have been apparent to them that the rulers' own people had abandoned them, the Chinese remained loyal to Nixon after his fall, and seemed unable to accept the legitimacy of his successors. It was one of the odd paradoxes of Nixon, whose rise to power was driven by anti-Communism, that he ended up being taken more seriously in Beijing (and, eventually, in Moscow) than he was in Washington. Indeed, he soon came to be a kind of lobbyist in Washington for the two mutually antagonistic Communist regimes.

He showed no discomfort at the thought; quite the contrary, he was proud of the faith the Chinese had placed in him. After dinner—at which, once again, each of the guests in turn presented the host with a little speech about the hopes and dreams of his own little segment of American capitalism (the Chinese were tactfully exempted from sharing their hopes and dreams with us), followed by a detailed *tour d'horizon* of the world situation from Nixon—I could not help wondering if there had been a little more frivolity when Pat Nixon was the hostess, and wishing for the presence of wives and/or girlfriends. Then we withdrew to a sombre room, with a huge rough-stone fireplace, for coffee and liqueurs. While my fellow-guests got down to the serious business of the evening—telling old political war stories from the Nixon campaigns and drinking monster Stingers—I followed Nixon, who had offered to show his Chinese guests around the house.

I WAS happy enough to tag along with Han Xu and his entourage for Nixon's tour. At first, nothing caught my eye. Most of the rooms had a certain formal, unlived-in quality, rather like an expensive hotel suite or, more to the point, the White House. The unlived-in feeling apparently extended to Nixon: he didn't seem familiar with the layout of the house himself. At one point, he opened a closet door, apparently thinking that it was the door to his study, then slammed it shut hastily, with a muttered oath. Like people lost in a museum, we circled aimlessly, it seemed to me, for some time, searching for a particular piece of art he wanted to show his guests, until he finally said, "Here it is!"—as if somebody had moved it, which was unlikely, since it was fastened elaborately to the wall, with a plaque underneath. As it happened, the piece was undoubtedly worth finding—a magnificent silk tapestry of a cat playing, a gift from Mao to Nixon. The Chinese seemed to me more interested in the plaque,



"Methinks the hors d'oeuvres are ready."



"If you ask me, wearing these things only makes them nervous."

• •

on which Mao's name appeared, than in the tapestry itself.

Nixon did not seem particularly interested in his collection. Perhaps he had shown it to visitors too many times before: the screen from the Japanese government, the Philippine folk art from President Marcos, the endless ceremonial gifts that are among the perks of being a head of state. With considerably more animation, Nixon flung open the door of his study—lucky on the second try—and ushered us in. "This," he said solemnly, "is where Nixon works."

The Chinese assumed a reverential expression—one they had perfected, presumably, for the display of any of Mao's artifacts. All the same, it was difficult to imagine any work being done in this unused room: it had something of the quality of a stage set furnished with expensive new props. No doubt Nixon was a clean-desk man, but this particular desk, shoved uncomfortably into a corner, showed no sign at all of use. There was not a paper in sight, and the desktop, like everything else in the room, was polished, spotless, and apparently brand new. The desk chair showed no signs that Nixon had ever sat in it—it might have come directly from a shop. "This is the desk at which Nixon wrote all his books," Nixon said. He patted its shiny leather top affectionately, as if it were a horse.

I looked around the room, searching for a single sign of Nixon's occupancy, for a single personal possession. There was none to be seen. We stood uncomfortably around the empty desk, and then Nixon, serious again, told Han Xu that he wanted him to have a souvenir of this visit—something that would convey some part of the American spirit. There was a man in the forties and fifties, he said, whom Nixon had always respected as a true patriot—a prophet without honor in his own country, a man who had made great sacrifices for the truth, and had been martyred for his pains, but had lived long enough to play an important part in Nixon's own career. That man wrote a book, Nixon continued, one of the most important books of the twentieth century, a book that every American ought to read, and not just Americans, either, for his message was universal.

We stood around Nixon, spellbound by his emotion, for he was speaking, it was apparent, from the heart, and his eyes, normally piercing, were humid. I racked my brain trying to think who this great American might be. Eisenhower seemed all wrong, and anyway I knew that the Nixons harbored a certain resentment toward Ike and Mamie, who seldom, if ever, invited them to a private dinner, just the four of them, during the eight years of the Eisenhower Presidency. John Foster Dulles crossed my mind, but it seemed unlikely that his views on China would commend themselves to Han Xu. Then it came to me. Of course! Nixon was talking about J. Edgar Hoover. Probably nobody had been a more loyal Nixon booster than Hoover, from the very beginning of the young congressman's career, and Nixon, during his Presidency, had once paid Hoover the supreme compliment of accepting an invitation to dinner in Hoover's house, with the smoked mirrors, the overstuffed easy chairs in which Hoover and Clyde Tolson used to sit companionably in the evenings watching television game shows while eating their dinners off TV trays. "Remind me never to do this again," Nixon was reported to have whispered to John Ehrlichman as they made an early departure from Hoover's dinner party. Yet there was no doubt that Nixon owed Hoover a lot.

But I was wrong. Nixon bent down and opened the bottom drawer of his big desk, and withdrew a copy of Whittaker Chambers' "Witness." I was fascinated to see that the drawer was full of hardcover copies of Chambers' book. Had Nixon bought up the entire stock, I wondered. Briefly, Nixon summed up Chambers' life for the politely bewildered Chinese. Had they heard about the Pumpkin Papers, about Alger Hiss, about the discovery of the typewriter on which Hiss committed treason? Succinctly, from long experience, Nixon filled the Chinese in on the Hiss case and Chambers' part in it, explaining to the three Communist bureaucrats the undoing of the Communist conspiracy in the United States and the way the liberal media persecuted all those who had tried to bring the truth to light, Nixon himself not excepted. Names emerged from the dim past: Helen Gahagan Douglas, Mrs. Hiss, Joe McCarthy—a whole chunk of American history, which now seemed as remote as the Long March probably seemed to the Chinese, and during which, as could hardly have escaped their notice, their own country had been billed as one of the principal villains. The Chinese nodded amiably—no doubt they were accustomed to hearing far more unlikely glosses on the past from their leaders, and at far greater length. Besides, they were not diplomats for nothing. Han Xu showed every sign of agreement with this view of history, and after Nixon autographed a copy of "Witness" for him he clutched it to his bosom as if it were the Holy Grail. Would he take it home, I wondered. Would scholars in China dissect Chambers' narrative carefully, looking for clues to understanding the United States, or to understanding Nixon? Would they puzzle over the Pumpkin Papers and write dissertations on the microfilm that marked the beginning of Richard Nixon's rise to power?

We returned to the fireplace, where the atmosphere, fuelled with Stingers, was getting boisterous. Nixon, I could tell, had had enough of the Chinese by now, and they seemed to have tired of him, too. They had what they had come for—a friendly signal from Nixon, a veiled assurance that he would not call off his visit—and a signed copy of "Witness" besides. I took my leave with them.

Nixon walked outside with us, to shake hands. He saw the Chinese into their waiting limo, then said good night to me. He looked across the blacktop at my Porsche, studied it carefully, and said, "What the hell is *that*?" He then went back indoors.

I left feeling like Dorothy leaving Oz. As I drove home, around me in the night was suburban New Jersey, and behind me was a kind of magic world—as remote, indeed, as Oz—where the past was still alive, where the Wizard was still wise and all-seeing, and where Whittaker Chambers was still an American hero. It was a testimony to Nixon's power that he could make *his* world, the world of his exile, seem more real than the world around him—that he could create, somehow, the illusion that he was still the President, that Watergate had never happened, that the bombing of Cambodia or the shooting of the Kent State students hadn't really mattered.

At that time, the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace had not yet opened, but I should have been able to predict what it would be like, even then, right down to the mail-order catalogue offering a T-shirt showing a nervously smiling Nixon shaking hands with a befuddled and stoned-looking Elvis Presley. In fact, Nixon was his own monument, a kind of living, breathing Mt. Rushmore—the one American President of this century about whom it is absolutely impossible to be indifferent. ♦

SHOWCASE

VANYA'S UNCLES

BY BRENDAN LEMON

ANDRÉ GREGORY'S staging of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," with Wallace Shawn in the title role, ran only intermittently from 199[illegible] to 1992, at the ramshackle Victory Theatre, on West Forty-second Street, but it quickly acquired a staunch band of loyalists. Few of them got to see the production more than once. Tickets were scarce because of the onstage seating (only about thirty people could be accommodated) and the rules of selection (audiences were drawn chiefly from the artists' friends and colleagues, although the inclusion of acting students and the occasional stranger meant that a Susan Sontag or a Mike Nichols might rub shoulders with someone Gregory had spotted that afternoon on the subway). Since the piece was presented as a work in progress, incorporating rehearsal-like elements and sometimes even members of the audience, its evolution over the years was dramatic.

Gregory's unconventional approach to the play, which takes place on a retired professor's country estate, is about to undergo further development. Next week, one of the faithful, the director Louis Malle, will begin filming the production, now called "Vanya," in the New Amsterdam Theatre, the spectacularly decrepit, soon-to-be-Disneyfied palace just down the block from the play's previous home. Except for Ruth Nelson, whose death hastened the Victory project's breakup, the original cast—including Julianne Moore, Brooke Smith, and Larry Pine—is reconvening. The shoot also, of course, reunites Malle, Shawn, and Gregory, veterans of the invigorating 1981 tête-à-tête "My Dinner with André."

The film will observe Gregory working with the actors before it moves into the play proper, and the opening scene will take place outside the theatre. "I always felt that Forty-second Street was important to this 'Uncle Vanya,'" Gregory says. "Chekhov, after all, was a master of dissolution." ♦

Louis Malle, Wallace Shawn, and André Gregory, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, February 16, 1994.

FICTION

XUELA

BY JAMAICA KINCAID

My mother died at the moment I was born, and so for my whole life there was nothing standing between me and eternity; at my back was always a bleak, black wind. I could not have known at the beginning of my life that this would be so; I only came to know this in the middle of my life, just at the time when I was no longer young and realized that I had less of some of the things I used to have in abundance and more of some of the things I had scarcely had at all. And this realization of loss and gain made me look backward and forward: at my beginning was this woman whose face I had never seen, but at my end was nothing, no one; there was nothing between me and the black room of the world. I came to feel that for my whole life I had been standing on a precipice, that my loss had made me vulnerable, that it had made me hard and helpless; on knowing this, I became overwhelmed with sadness and shame and pity for myself.

When my mother died, leaving me a small child vulnerable to all the world, my father took me and placed me in the care of the same woman he paid to wash his clothes. It is possible that he emphasized to her the difference between the two bundles; one was his child, perhaps not the only child of his in the world but the only child he had had with the only woman he had married so far, the other was his soiled clothes. He would have handled one more gently than the other, he would have given more careful instructions for the care of one than for the other, he would have expected better care for one than the other—but which one I do not know, because he was a vain man, his appearance was very important to him. That I was a burden to him then, I know; that his soiled clothes were a burden to him then, I know; that he did not know how to take care of me by himself, that he did not know how to clean his own clothes himself then, I know.

He had lived in a very small house with my mother. He was poor, but it was not because he was good; he had simply not done enough bad things yet to get rich. The house was on a hill, and he had walked down the hill balancing in one hand his child, in the other his clothes, and he gave them, bundle and child, to this woman. She was not a relative of his or of my mother's; her name was Eunice Paul, and she had six children already, the last one still a baby. That was why she still had some milk to give me, but in my mouth it tasted sour, and I would not drink it. She lived in a house that was far from other houses, and from it there was a broad view of the sea and the mountains, and when I was irritable and unable to console myself she would prop me up on a pile of old clothes and place me under a tree, and at the sight of that sea and those mountains, so unpitying, I would exhaust myself in tears.

Ma Eunice was not unkind: she treated me just the way she treated her own children—but that is not to say that she was kind to her own children. In a place like this, brutality is the only real inheritance and cruelty is sometimes the only thing freely given. I did not like her, and I missed the face I had never seen; I looked over my shoulder to see if someone was coming, as if I were expecting someone to come, and Ma Eunice would ask me what I was looking for, at first as a joke, but when, after a time, I did not stop doing it, she thought that it meant I could see spirits. I could not see spirits at all, I was just looking for that face, that face I would never see, even if I lived forever.

I never grew to love this woman my father left me with, this woman who was not unkind to me but who could not be kind because she did not know how—and perhaps I could not love her because I, too, did not know how. She fed me food forced through a sieve when I would not drink her milk and did not yet have teeth; when I grew teeth, the first thing I did was to sink them into her hand as she fed me. A small sound escaped her mouth then, more from surprise than from pain, and she knew this for what it was—my first act of ingratitude—and it put her on her guard against me for the rest of the time we knew each other.

Until I was four I did not speak. This did not cause anyone to lose a minute of happiness; there was no one who would have worried about it in any case. I knew I could speak, but I did not want to. I saw my father every fortnight, when he came to get his clean clothes. I never thought of him as coming to visit me; I thought of him as coming to pick up his clean clothes. When he came, I was brought to him, and he would ask me how I was, but it was a formality; he would never touch me or look into my eyes. What was there to see in my eyes then? Eunice washed, ironed, and folded his clothes; they were wrapped up like a gift in two pieces of clean nankeen cloth and placed on a table, the only table in the house, waiting for him to come and pick them up. His visits were quite steady, and so when one time he did not appear as he usually did I noticed it. I said, "Where is my father?"

I said it in English—not patois French or English but plain English—and that should have been the surprise; not that I spoke but that I spoke English, a language I had never heard anyone speak. Ma Eunice and her children spoke the language of Dominica, which is French patois, and my father, when he spoke to me, spoke that language also. But no one noticed; they only marvelled at the fact that I had finally spoken. That the first words I said were in the language of a people I would never like or love is not now a mystery to me; almost everything in my life to which I am inextricably bound is a source of pain.

I was then four years old and saw the world as a series of sketches, soft strokes in charcoal; and so when my father would come and take his clothes away I saw only that he suddenly appeared on the small path that led from the main road to the door of the house in which I lived and then, after completing his mission, disappeared as he turned onto the road, where it met the path. I did not know what lay beyond the path; I did not know if after he passed from my sight he remained my father or dissolved into something altogether different and I would never see him again in the form of my father. I would have accepted it.

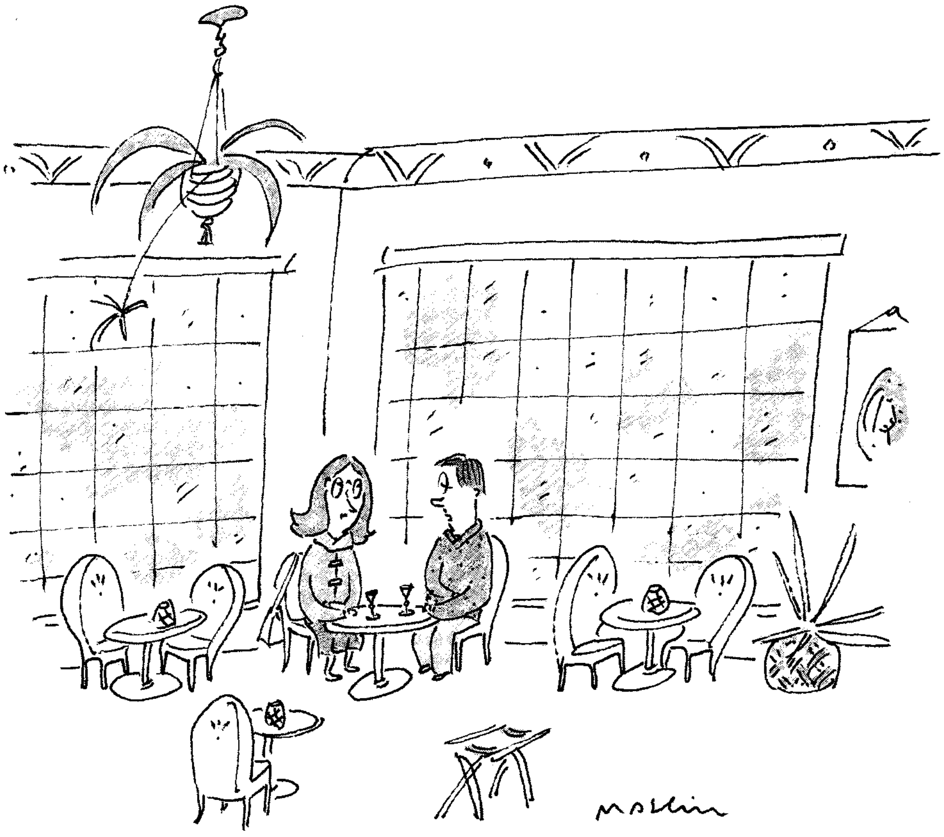
I did not talk and I would not talk.

One day, without meaning to, I broke a plate, the only bone-china plate that Eunice had ever owned, and the words "I am sorry" would not pass my lips. The sadness she expressed over this loss fascinated me; it was so intense, so overwhelming, so deep: she grabbed the thick pouch that was her stomach, she pulled at her hair, she pounded her bosom, large tears rolled out of her eyes and down her cheeks, and they came in such profusion that if they had become a new source of water, as in a myth or a fairy tale, my small self would not have been surprised. I had been warned repeatedly by her not to touch this plate, for she had seen me look at it with an obsessive curiosity. I would look at it and wonder about the picture painted on its surface, a picture of a wide-open field filled with grass and flowers in the most tender shades of yellow, pink, blue, and green; the sky had a sun in it that shone but did not burn bright; the clouds were thin and scattered about like a decoration, not thick and banked up, not harbingers of doom; it was nothing but a field full of grass and flowers on a sunny day, but it had an atmosphere of secret abundance, happiness, and tranquillity; underneath this picture, written in gold letters, was the word "Heaven." Of course it was not a picture of Heaven at all. It was a picture of the English countryside idealized, but I did not know that, I did not know that such a thing as the English countryside existed. And neither did Eunice; she thought that this picture was a picture of Heaven, offering as it did a promise of a life without worry or care or want.

When I broke the china plate on which this picture was painted, and caused Ma Eunice to cry so, I did not immediately feel sorry, I did not feel sorry shortly after; I only felt sorry long afterward, and by then it was too late to tell her so, she had died by then; perhaps she went to Heaven and it fulfilled what was promised on that plate. When I broke the plate, she cursed my dead mother, she cursed my father, she cursed me. The words she used were without meaning; I understood them, but they did not hurt me, for I did not love her. And she did not love me; she made me kneel down on her stone heap—which was situated in a spot that got direct sun all day long—with my hands raised high above my head and with a large stone in each hand. She meant to keep me in this position until I said the words "I am sorry," but I would not say them, I could not say them. It was beyond my own will; those words could not pass my lips then. I stayed like that until she exhausted herself cursing me and all whom I came from.

And should this punishment, redolent as it was in every way of the relationship between captor and captive, master and slave, with its motif of the big and the small, the powerful and the powerless, the strong and the weak, and against a background of earth, sea, and sky, and Eunice standing over me, metamorphosing into a succession of things furious and not human with each syllable that passed her lips; with her dress of a thin, badly woven cotton, the bodice of a contrary color and pattern that clashed with the skirt; her hair uncombed, unwashed for many months, wrapped in a piece of old cloth that had been unwashed for longer than her hair; the dress had once been new and clean, and dirt had made it old but dirt had made it new again by giving it shadings it did not have before, and dirt would finally cause it to disintegrate altogether, but she was not a dirty woman, she washed her feet every night; the day was clear, it was not the rainy time, some men were on the sea casting nets for fish, but they would not catch too many because it was a clear day; and three of her children were eating bread and they rolled up the inside of the bread into small pebblelike shapes and threw it at me as I knelt there and they laughed at me; and the sky was without a cloud and there was not a breeze, a fly flew back and forth across my face, sometimes landing on a corner of my mouth; an overripe breadfruit fell off its tree, and that sound was like a fist meeting the soft, fleshy part of a body . . . All this, all this I can remember—should it have made a lasting impression on me?

But as I was kneeling there I saw three land turtles crawling in and out of



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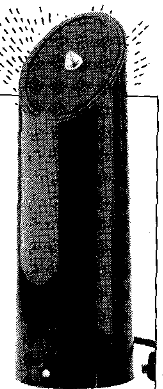

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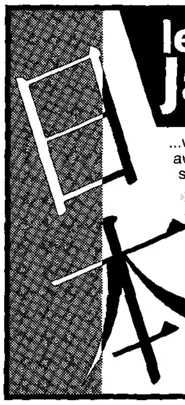

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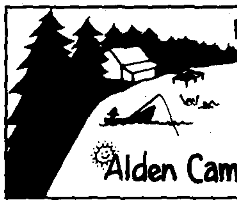

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the small space under the house, and I fell in love with them, I wanted to have them near me, I wanted to speak only to them each day for the rest of my life. Long after my ordeal was over—resolved in a way that did not please Ma Eunice, for I did not say I was sorry—I took all three turtles and placed them in an enclosed area where they could not come and go as they pleased and where they were completely dependent on me for food. I would bring to them the leaves of vegetables, and water in seashells. I thought them beautiful, with their shells dark-gray with faint yellow circles, their long necks, their unjudging eyes, the slow deliberateness of their crawl. But they would withdraw into their shells when I did not want them to, and when I called them they would not come out; to teach them a lesson, I took some mud from the riverbed and covered up the small hole from which each neck would emerge, and I allowed it to dry; I covered over the place where they lived with stones, and for days afterward I forgot about them. When they came into my mind again, I went to take a look at them in the place where I had left them. They were by then all dead.

It was my father's wish that I be sent to school. It was an unusual request; girls did not attend school. I shall never know what made him do such a thing. I can only imagine that he desired such a thing for me without giving it too much thought, because in the end what could an education do for someone like me? I can only say what I did not have; I can only measure it against what I did have and find misery in the difference. And yet, and yet—it was for that reason that I came to see for the first time what lay beyond the path that led away from my house.

I can so well remember the feel of the cloth of my skirt and blouse—coarse because it was new—a green skirt and beige blouse, a uniform, its colors and style mimicking the colors and style of a school somewhere else, somewhere far away; and I had on a pair of brown canvas shoes and brown cotton socks which my father had got for me, I did not know from where. And to mention that I did not know where these things came from, to say that I wondered about them is really to say that this was the first time I had worn such things as shoes and socks, and they caused my feet to ache and swell and the skin to blister and break, but I was made to wear them until my feet got used to it. That morning was a morning like any other, so ordinary it was profound: it was sunny in some places and not in others, and the two (sunny, cloudy) occupied different parts of the sky quite comfortably; the green of the trees, the red burst of the flowers from the flamboyant trees, the sickly yellow fruit of the cashew, the smell of lime, the smell of almonds, the coffee on my breath, Eunice's skirt blowing in my face, and the stirring up of the smells that came from between her legs, which I shall never forget, and whenever I smell myself I am reminded of her; the river was low, so I did not hear the sound of the water rushing over stones; the breeze was soft, so the leaves did not rustle in the trees.

And I had these sensations of seeing, smelling, and hearing during my journey down the path that began at Eunice's door and ended where it met the road; and when I reached the road and placed my newly shod foot on it, that was the first time I had done so; I was aware of this. It was a road of small stones and dirt tightly packed together, and each step I took was awkward; the ground shifted, my feet slipped backward. The road stretched out ahead of me and then it vanished in a bend; we kept walking toward this bend and then we came to the bend and the bend gave way to more of the same road and then another bend. We came to my school long before the end of the last bend: it was a small building with one door and four windows; it had a wooden floor; there was a lizard crawling along a beam in the roof; there were three long desks lined up one behind the other; there was a large wooden table and a chair facing the three long desks; on the wall behind the wooden table and chair was a map; at the top of the map were the words "The British Empire." Those were the first words I learned to read.

In that room there were always boys; I did not sit in a schoolroom with other girls until I was older. I was not afraid in that new situation: I did not know how to be that then and do not know how to be that now. I was not afraid then, because my mother had already died, and that is the only thing a child is really afraid of; when I was born my mother was dead, and I had already lived all those years with Eunice, a woman who was not my mother and who could not love me, and I had lived without my father, never knowing when I would see him again, so I was not afraid for myself in this situation. (And if it is not really true that I was not afraid then, it was not the only time that I did not admit to myself my own vulnerability.)

At the time, each thing as it took place stood out in my mind with a sharpness that I now take for granted; it did not then have a meaning, it did not have a context, I did not yet know the history of events, I did not know their antecedents. My teacher was a woman who had been trained by Methodist missionaries; she was of the African people, that I could see, and she found in this a source of humiliation and self-loathing, and she wore despair like an article of clothing, like a mantle, or a staff on which she leaned constantly, a birthright which she would pass on to us without effort. She did not love us; we did not love her; we did not love one another, not then, not ever. There were seven boys and myself. The boys, too, were all of the African people. My teacher and these boys looked at me and looked at me: I had thick eyebrows; my hair was coarse, thick, and wavy; my eyes were set far apart from each other and they had the shape of almonds; my lips were wide and narrow in an unexpected way. I was of the African people, but not exclusively. My mother was a Carib woman, and when they looked at me this is what they saw; and it was my teacher who, at the end of the day, in bidding me good evening, called me Miss Boiled Fish—she thought me pale and weak.

I started to speak quite openly then—to myself frequently, to others only when it was absolutely necessary. We spoke English in school—proper English, not patois—and among ourselves we spoke French patois, a language that was not considered proper at all, a language that a person from France could not speak and could only with difficulty understand. I spoke to myself because I grew to like the sound of my own voice. It had a sweetness to me, it made my loneliness less, for I was lonely and wished to see people in whose faces I could see something of myself. Because who was I? My mother was dead; when I saw my father I could not tell what I meant to him.

I learned to read and write very quickly. My memory, my ability to retain information, to remember the tiniest detail, to recall who said what and when, was regarded as unusual, so unusual that my teacher, who was trained to think only of good and evil and whose judgment of such things was always mistaken, said I was evil, I was possessed—and to establish that there could be no doubt of this she pointed to the fact that my mother was a Carib woman.

My world, then—silent, soft, and vegetablelike in its vulnerability, subject to the powerful whims of others, diurnal, beginning with the pale opening of light on the horizon each morning and ending with a sudden onset of dark at the beginning of each night—was both a mystery to me and the source of much pleasure. I loved the face of a gray sky, porous, grainy, wet, following me to school for mornings on end, shooting down soft arrows of water on me; the face of that same sky when it was a hard, unsheltering blue, a backdrop for a cruel sun; the harsh heat that eventually became a part of me, like my blood; the massive trees, the stems of some of them the size of small trunks, that grew without restraint, as if beauty were only size, and which I could tell apart by closing my eyes and listening to the sound the leaves made when they rubbed together; and I loved that moment when the white flowers from the cedar tree started to fall to the ground with a silence that I could hear, their petals at first still fresh, a soft kiss of pink and white, then a day later crushed, wilted, and brown, a nuisance to the eye; and the river that had become a small lagoon when one day on its own it changed its course, on whose bank I would sit and watch families of birds, and frogs laying their eggs, and the sky turning from black to blue and blue to black, and rain falling on the sea beyond the lagoon but not on the mountain that was beyond the sea.

It was while sitting in this place that I first began to dream about my mother; I had fallen asleep on the stones that covered the ground around me, my small body sinking into this surface as if it were a bed of feathers. I saw my mother come down a ladder. She wore a long white gown, the hem of it falling

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just above her heels, and that was all of her that was exposed, just her heels; she came down and down, but no more of her was ever revealed. Only her heels, only the hem of the gown. At first I longed to see more, and then I became satisfied just to see her heels coming down toward me. When I awoke, I was not the same child I had been before I fell asleep. I longed to see my father and to be in his presence constantly.

ON a day that began in no special way that I can remember, I was taught the principles involved in writing an ordinary letter. A letter has six parts: the address of the sender, the date, the address of the recipient, the salutation or greeting, the body of the letter, the closing of the letter. It was well known that a person in the position I was expected to occupy—the position of a woman, and a poor one—would have no need whatsoever to write a letter, but the sense of satisfaction it gave everyone connected with teaching me this, writing a letter, must have been immense. I was beaten and harsh words were said to me when I made a mistake. The exercise of copying the letters of someone whose complaints or perceptions or joys were of no interest to me did not make me angry then; it only made me want to write my own letters, letters in which I would express my own feelings about my own life, as it appeared to me at seven years old. I started to write to my father. "My Dear Papa," I wrote, in a lovely, decorative penmanship, a penmanship born of beatings and harsh words. I would say to him that I was mistreated by Eunice in word and deed and that I missed him and loved him very much. I wrote the same thing over and over again. It was without detail; it was without color. It was nothing but the plaintive cry of a small, wounded animal: "My Dear Papa, you are the only person I have left in the world, no one loves me, only you can, I am beaten with words, I am beaten with sticks, I am beaten with stones, I love you more than anything, only you can save me." These words were not meant for my father at all, but the person for whom they were meant—I could see only her heel. Night after night I saw her heel, only her heel coming down to meet me.

I wrote these letters without any intention of sending them to my father; I did not know how to do that, to send them. I folded them up in such a way that if they were torn along the folds they would make eight small squares. There was no mysterious significance to this; I did it to make them fit more neatly under a large stone just outside the gate to my school. Each day, as I left, I would place a letter I had written to my father under it. I had, of course, written these letters in secret, during the small amount of time allotted to us as recess, or during some time when I was supposed to be doing other work but had finished before I was noticed. Pretending to be deeply involved in what I was supposed to be doing, I would write my father a letter.

This small cry for help did not bring me instant relief. I recognized my own misery, but that it could be alleviated—that my life could change, that my circumstances could change—did not occur to me.

My letters did not remain a secret. A boy named Roman had seen me putting them in their secret storage place and, behind my back, he removed them. He had no empathy or pity; any instinct to protect the weak had been destroyed in him. He took my letters to our teacher. In my letters to my father I had said, "Everyone hates me, only you love me," but I had not truly meant these letters to be sent to my father, and they were not really addressed to my father; if I had been asked then if I really felt that everyone hated me, that only my father loved me, I would not have known how to answer. But my teacher's reaction to my letters, those small scribblings, was fascinating to me—a tonic. She believed the "everybody" I referred to was herself, and only herself. She said that my words were calumny, a lie, libellous, that she was ashamed of me, that she was not afraid of me. My teacher said all this to me in front of the other pupils at my school. They thought I was humiliated, and they felt joy to see me brought so low. I did not feel humiliated at all. Her teeth were crooked and yellow, and I wondered then how they had got that way. Large half-moons of perspiration stained the underarms of her dress, and I wondered if when I became a woman I, too, would perspire so profusely and how it would smell. Behind her shoulder on the wall was a large female spider carrying its sac of eggs, and I wanted

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to reach out and crush it with the bare palm of my hand, because I wondered if it was the same kind of spider or a relative of the spider that had sucked saliva from the corner of my mouth the night before as I lay sleeping, leaving three small, painful bites. There was a drizzle of rain outside; I could hear the sound of it on the galvanized roof.

She sent my letters to my father, apparently to show me that she had a clear conscience. She said that I had mistaken her scoldings, which were administered out of love for me, as an expression of hatred and that this showed that I was guilty of the sin called pride. And she said that she hoped I would learn to tell the difference between the two, love and hate. And when she said this I did look in her face to see if I could tell whether it was true that she loved me and to see if her words, which so often seemed to be a series of harsh blows, were really an expression of love. Her face to me then did not appear loving, and perhaps I was mistaken—perhaps I was too young to judge, too young to know.

I did not immediately recognize what had happened, what I had done: however unconsciously, however without direction, I had, through the use of some words, changed my situation, I had perhaps even saved my life. To speak of my own situation, to myself or to others, is something I would always do thereafter. It is in that way that I came to be so extremely conscious of myself, so interested in my own needs, so interested in fulfilling them, aware of my grievances, aware of my pleasures. From this unfocussed, childish expression of pain, my life was changed, and I took note of it.

MY father came to fetch me wearing the uniform of a jailer. To him this had no meaning, it was without significance. He was returning to Roseau from the village of St. Joseph, where he had been carrying out his duties as a policeman. I was not told that he would arrive on that day, I had not expected him. I returned from school and saw him standing at the final bend in the road that led to the house in which I lived. I was surprised to see him, but I would only admit this to myself; I did not let anyone know.

The reason I had missed my father so—the reason he no longer came to the house in which I lived, bringing his dirty

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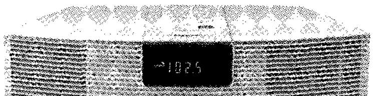

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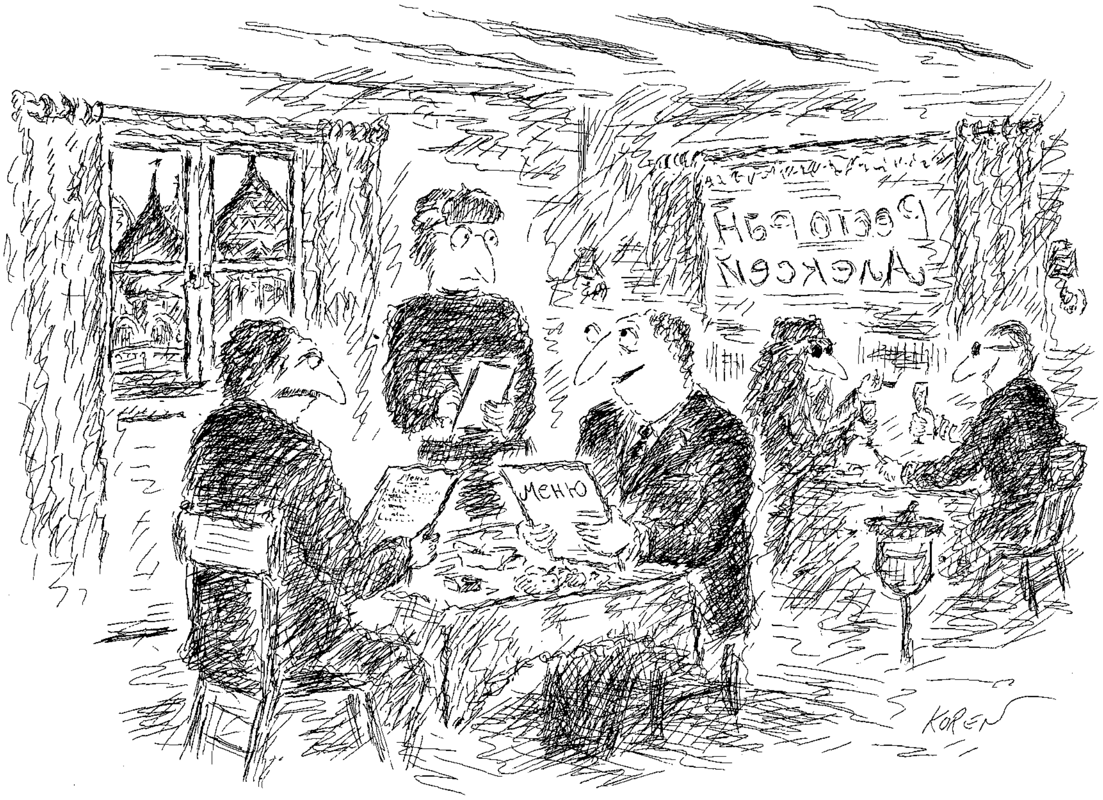

"I'll start with the arugula-and-goat-cheese salad, and then I'll have the blackened wolf."

clothes and taking away clean ones—*was that he had married again.* I had been told about this, but it was a mystery to me what it might mean; it was not unlike when I had been told that the world was round and it was the first time I had heard such a thing. I thought, What could it mean, why should it be? My father had married again. He took my hand, he said something, he spoke in English, his mouth had begun to curl around the words he spoke, and it made him appear benign, attractive, even kind. I understood what he said: He had a home for me now, a good home; I would love his wife, my new mother; he loved me as much as he loved himself, perhaps even more, because I reminded him of someone he knew with certainty he had loved even more than he had loved himself. I would love my new home; I would love the sky above me and the earth below.

The word "love" was spoken with such frequency that it became a clue to my seven-year-old mind, a clue that the love being spoken of did not exist. My father's eyes grew small and then they grew big; he believed what he said, and that was a good thing, because I did not. But I would not have wanted to stop this progression, this going away from here; and though I did not believe him I did not have any reason not to, and I was not yet cynical, I did not yet think that behind everything I heard lay another story altogether.

I thanked Eunice for taking care of me. I did not mean it, I could not mean it, but I would mean it if I said it now. I did not say goodbye. All my belongings were in a muslin knapsack, and my father placed it in a bag that was strapped on the donkey he had been riding. He placed me on the donkey, and then he sat behind me. And this was how we looked as my back was turned on the small house in which I spent the first seven years of my life: a man and his small daughter on the back of a donkey at the end of an ordinary day, a day that had no meaning if you were less than a smudge on a page covered with print. I could hear my father's breath, it was not the breath of my life; the back of my head touched his chest from time to time; I could hear the sound of his heart beating through the shirt of his uniform, a uniform that made people afraid when they saw him coming toward them. His presence in my life then was a good thing, and it was too bad that he had not thought of changing his clothes. It was too bad that I noticed he had not done so; it was too bad that such a thing would matter to me.

This new experience of leaving the past behind—of going from one place to another and knowing that whatever had been would remain just as it had been—was something I immediately accepted, a gift. This simple movement, the turning of your back to leave something behind, is among the most difficult to make, but once it has been made you cannot imagine that it was at all hard to accomplish. I had not been able to do it all by myself, but I could see that I had set in *motion the events that would make it* possible. If I were ever to find myself sitting in that schoolroom again, or sitting in Eunice's yard again, sleeping in her bed, eating with her children, none of it would have the same power it had once had over me—the power to make me feel helpless and ashamed of my own helplessness.

I could not see the look on my father's face as we rode, I did not know what he was thinking, I did not know him well enough to guess. He set off down the road in the opposite direction from the schoolhouse. This stretch of road was new to me, and yet it had a familiarity that made me sad. Around each bend was the familiar dark green of the trees that grew with a ferociousness that no hand had yet attempted to restrain, green unrelenting and complete; nothing could be added to it and nothing could be taken away from it. Each precipice along the road was steep and dangerous, and a fall down one of them would result in death or a lasting injury. And each climb up was followed by a slope down, at the bottom of which clustered, along the road, a choke of flowering plants, each plant with a purpose not yet known to me. And each curve that ran left would soon give way to a curve that ran right.

The day then began to have the colors of an ending, the colors of a funeral, gray and mauve, and my sadness became manifest to me. I was a part of a procession of sadness, which was moving away from my old life, a life I had lived then for only seven years. I did not become overwhelmed, though. The dark of night came on with its usual suddenness. My father placed an arm around me then, as if to ward off something—a danger I could not see in the cool air, an evil spirit, a fall. His clasp was at first gentle; then it grew tighter; it had the strength of an iron band. I did not become overwhelmed.

We entered the village in the dark. There were no lights anywhere, no dog barked, we did not pass anyone. We entered the house in which my father lived, and there was a light coming from a beautiful glass lamp, something I had never seen before; the light was fuelled by a clear liquid that I could see through the base of the lamp, which was embossed with the heads of animals unfamiliar to me. The lamp was on a shelf, and the shelf was made of mahogany, its brackets curling in the shape of two tightly closed paws. The room was crowded, containing a chair on which two people could sit at once, two other chairs on which only one person could sit, and a small, low table draped with a piece of white linen. The walls of the house and the partition that separated this first room from the other rooms of the house were covered with a kind of paper, and the paper was decorated with small pink roses. I had never seen anything like this before, except once, while looking through a book at my school—but the picture I had seen then was a drawing, illustrating a story about the domestic life of a small mammal who lived in a field with his family. In their burrow, the walls had been covered with similar paper. I had understood that story about the small mammal to be a pretense, something to amuse a child, but this was my father's very real house, a house with a bright lamp in a room, and a room that seemed to exist only for an occasional purpose.

At that moment I realized that there were so many things I did not know, not

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including the very big thing I did not know—my mother. I did not know my father; I did not know where he was from or whom and what he liked; I did not know the land whose surface I had just crossed on an animal's back; I did not know who I was or why I was standing there in that room of occasional purpose with the lamp. A great sea of what I did not know opened up before me, and its treacherous currents pulsed over my head repeatedly until I was sure I was dead. I had only fainted. I opened my eyes soon after that to see the face of my father's wife not too far above mine. She had the face of evil. I had no other face to compare it with; I only knew that this was the face of evil as far as I could tell. She did not like me. I could see that. She did not love me. I could see that. I could not see the rest of her right away—only her face. She was of the African people and the French people. It was nighttime and she was in her own house, so her hair was exposed; it was smooth and yet tightly curled, and she wore it parted in the middle and plaited in two braids that were pinned up in the back. Her lips were shaped like those of people from a cold climate: thin and ungenerous. Her eyes were black, and not with beauty but with deceit. Her nose was long and sharp, like an arrow; her cheekbones were also sharp.

She did not like me. She did not love me. I could see it in her face. My spirit rose to meet this obstacle. No love. I could live in a place like this. I knew this atmosphere all too well. Love would have defeated me. Love would always defeat me. In an atmosphere of no love I could live well; in this atmosphere of no love I could make a life for myself. She held a cup to my mouth; one of her hands brushed against my face, and it felt cold; she was feeding me a tea, something to revive me, but it tasted bitter, like a bad potion. My small tongue allowed no more than a drop of it to come into my mouth, but the bad and bitter taste of it warmed my young heart. I sat up. Our eyes did not meet and lock; I was too young to throw out such a challenge. I could then act only on instinct.

I was led down a short hallway to a room. It was to be my own room. My father lived in a house in which there were so many rooms that I could occupy my own. This small event immediately became central to my life: I adjusted to this evidence of privacy without question. My room was lit by a small lamp, the size of my fist, and I could see my bed: small, of wood, a white sheet on its copra-filled mattress, a square, flat pillow. I had a washstand, on which stood a basin and an urn that had water in it. I did not see a towel. (I did not then know how to wash myself properly in any case, and the lesson I eventually got came with many words of abuse.) There was not a picture on the wall. The walls were not covered with paper; the bare wood—pine—was not painted. It was the plainest of plain rooms, but it had in it more luxury than I had ever imagined; it offered me something I did not even know I needed; it offered me solitude.

All of my little being, physical and spiritual, could find peace here, in this little place where I could sit and take stock.

I sat down on the bed. My heart was breaking; I wanted to cry, I felt so alone. I felt in danger, I felt threatened; I felt as each minute passed that someone wished me dead. My father's wife came to say goodnight, and she turned out the lamp. She spoke to me then in French patois; in his presence she had spoken to me in English. She would do this to me through all the time we knew each other, but that first time, in the sanctuary of my room, at seven years old, I recognized this as an attempt on her part to make an illegitimate of me, to associate me with the made-up language of people regarded as not real—the shadow people, the forever humiliated, the forever low. Then she went to the part of the house where she and my father slept; it was far away; I could hear the sound of her footsteps fade; I could hear their voices as they spoke, the sounds swirling upward to the empty space beneath the ceiling; they had a conversation; I could not make out the words; the emotions seemed neutral, neither hot nor cold; there was some silence; there were short gasps and sighs; there was the sound of people sleeping, breath escaping through their mouths.

I lay down to sleep, to dream of my mother—for I knew I would do that, I knew I would make myself do that. She came down the ladder again and again, over and over, just her heels and the hem of her white dress visible; down,

down, I watched her all night in my dream. I did not see her face. I was not disappointed. I would have loved to see her face, but I didn't long for it anymore. She sang a song, but it had no words; it was not a lullaby, it was not sentimental, not meant to calm me when my soul roiled at the harshness of life; it was only a song, but the sound of her voice was like treasure found in an abandoned chest, a treasure that inspires not astonishment but contentment and eternal pleasure.

All night I slept and in my sleep saw her feet come down the ladder, step after step, and I heard her voice singing that song, sometimes humming, sometimes through an open mouth. To this day she will appear in my dreams from time to time, but never again to sing or utter a sound of any kind—only as before, coming down a ladder, her heels visible and the white hem of her garment above them.

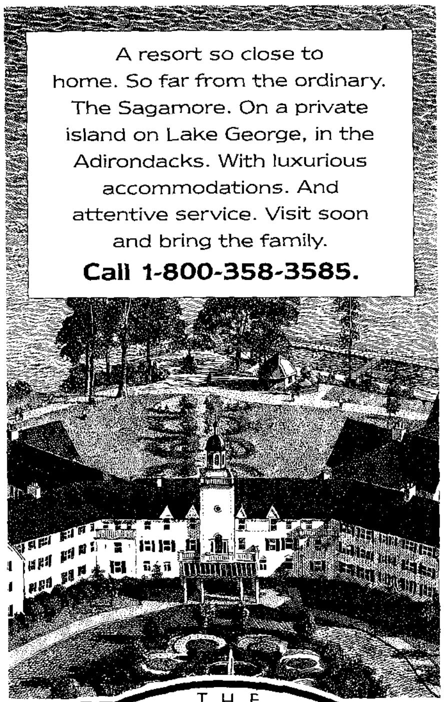
I CAME to my father's house in the blanket of voluptuous blackness that was the night; a morning naturally followed. I awoke to the same landscape that I had always known, each aspect of it beyond reproach, at once beautiful, ugly, humble, and proud; full of life, full of death, able to sustain the one, inevitably to claim the other.

My father's wife showed me how to wash myself. It was not done with kindness. My human form and odor were an opportunity to heap scorn on me. I responded in a fashion by now characteristic of me: whatever I was told to hate I loved. I loved the smell of the thin dirt behind my ears, the smell that comes from between my legs, the smell in the pits of my arms, the smell of my unwashed feet. Whatever about me caused offense, whatever was native to me, whatever I could not help and was not a moral failing—those things about me I loved with the fervor of the devoted. Her hands as they touched me were cold and caused me pain. In her was a despair rooted in a desire long thwarted; she had not yet been able to bear my father a child. She was afraid of me; she was afraid that because of me my father would think of my mother more often than he thought of her. On that first morning, she gave me some food, and it was old, moldy, as if she had saved it especially for me, in order to make me sick. I did not eat what she offered after that; I learned then how to prepare my own food and made this a trait by which others would know me: I was a girl who prepared her own food.

Parts of my life then, incidents in my life then, seem, when I remember them now, as if they were taking place in a very small, dark place, a place the size of a doll's house, and the doll's house is at the bottom of a cellar, and I am way up at the top of the stairs peering down into this little house trying to make out exactly what is happening down there. And sometimes when I look down at this scene certain things are not in the same place they were in the last time I looked; different things are in the shadows, different things are in the light.

WHO was my father? Not just who was he to me, his child—but who was he? He was a policeman, but not an ordinary policeman; he inspired more than the expected amount of fear for someone in his position. He made appointments to see people, men, at his house, the place where he lived with his family—this entity of which I was now a sort of member—and he would make these people wait for hours or he wouldn't show up at all. They waited for him, sometimes sitting on a stone that was just inside the gate of the yard, sometimes pacing back and forth from inside the yard to outside the yard, causing the gate to creak, and this always made his wife cross, and she would complain to these people, speaking rudely to them, the rudeness way out of proportion to the annoyance of the creaky gate. They waited for him without complaint, sometimes falling asleep standing up, sometimes falling asleep as they sat on the ground. They waited, and when he did not show up they left and returned the next day, hoping to see him; sometimes they did, sometimes they did not. He suffered no consequences for his behavior; he just treated people in this way. He did not care, or so I thought at first—but of course he did care; it was well thought out, this way he had of causing suffering; he was part of a whole way of life on the island which perpetuated pain.

At the time I came to live with him, he had just mastered the mask that he



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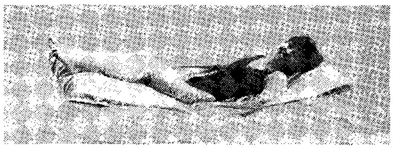

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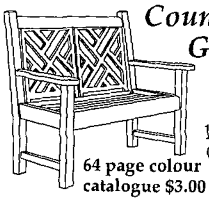

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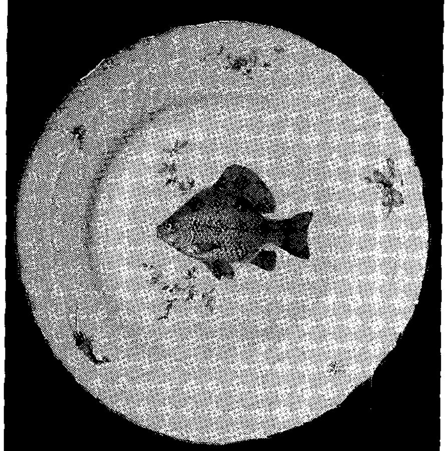

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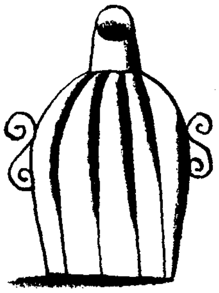
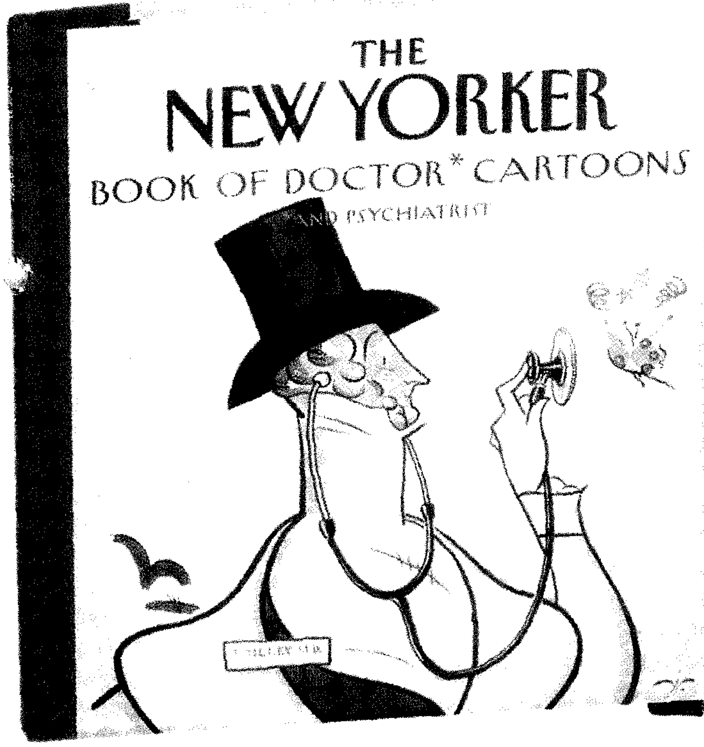
wore for the remainder of his life: the skin taut, the eyes small and drawn back as though deep inside his head, so that it wasn't possible to get a clue to him from them, the lips parted in a smile. He seemed trustworthy. His clothes were always ironed, clean, spotless. He did not like people to know him very well; he tried never to eat food in the presence of strangers or in the presence of people who were afraid of him.

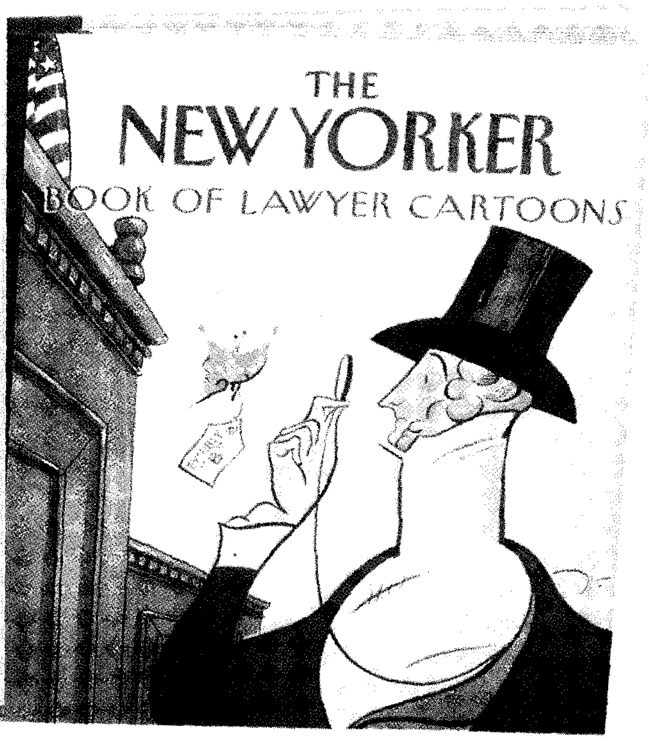
Who was he? I ask myself this all the time, to this day. Who was he? He was a tall man; his hair was red; his eyes were gray. He must have loved me then, he had told me so. I never heard him say words of love to anyone. He wanted me to continue going to school, but I do not know why. It was a great sacrifice that I should go to school, because, as his wife often pointed out, I would have been more useful at home. He gave me books to read. He gave me a life of John Wesley, and as I read it I wondered what the life of a man so full of spiritual tumult and piety had to do with me. My father had become a Methodist and attended church every Sunday; he taught Sunday school. The more money he had, the more he went to church. And the richer he became, the more fixed the mask of his face grew, so that now I no longer remember what he really looked like when I first knew him long ago, before I came to live with him. And so my mother and father then were a mystery to me: one through death, the other through the maze of living; one I had never seen, the other I saw constantly.



The world I came to know was full of treachery, but I did not remain afraid, I did not become cautious. I was not indifferent to the danger my father's wife posed to me, and I was not indifferent to the danger she thought my presence posed to her. So in my father's house, which was her home, I tried to cloak myself in an atmosphere of apology. I did not in fact feel sorry for anything at all, and I had not done anything, either deliberately or by accident, that warranted my begging for forgiveness, but my gait was a weapon—a way of deflecting her attention from me, of persuading her to think of me as someone who was pitiable, an ignorant child. I did not like her, I did not wish her dead, I only wanted her to leave me alone.

I would lie in my bed at night and turn my ear to the sounds that were inside and outside the house, identifying each noise, separating the real from the unreal: whether the screeches that crisscrossed the night, leaving the blackness to fall to the earth like so many ribbons, were the screeches of bats or of someone who had taken the shape of a bat; whether the sound of wings beating in that space so empty of light was a bird or someone who had taken the shape of a bird. The sound of the gate being opened was my father coming home long after the stillness of sleep had overtaken most of his household, his footsteps stealthy but sure, coming into the yard, up the steps, his hand opening the door to his house, closing the door behind him, turning the bar that made the door secure, walking to another part of the house; he never ate meals when he returned home late at night. The sound of the sea then, at night, could be heard clearly, sometimes as a soft swish, a lapping of waves against the shore of black stones, sometimes with the anger of water boiling in a cauldron resting unsteadily on a large fire. And sometimes, when the night was completely still and completely black, I could hear, outside, the long sigh of someone on the way to eternity; and this, of all things, would disturb the troubled peace of all that was real: the dogs asleep under houses, the chickens in the trees, the trees themselves moving about, not in a way that suggested an uprooting, just a moving about, as if they wished they could run away. And if I listened again I could hear the sound of those who crawled on their bellies, of those who carried poisonous lances, and those who carried a deadly poison in their saliva; I could hear the ones who were hunting, the ones who were hunted, the pitiful cry of the small ones who were about to be devoured, followed by the temporary satisfaction of the ones doing the devouring: all this I heard night after night. And it ended only after my hands had travelled up and down all over my own body in a loving caress, finally coming to the soft, moist spot between my legs, and a gasp of pleasure had escaped my lips which I would allow no one to hear. ♦





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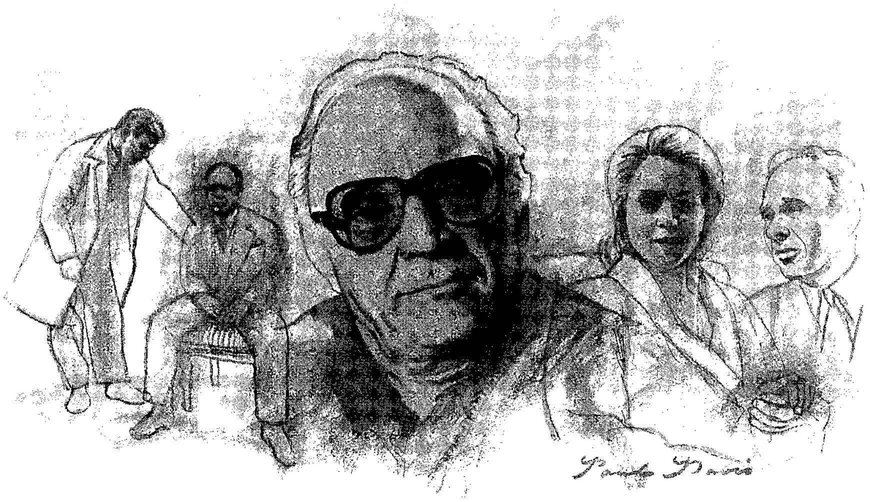
DEAD SOULS

BY JOHN LAHR

"THERE are no second acts in American lives," F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote. He was wrong. There are no intermissions. According to the wacky American notion of progress, a writer who achieves greatness must never rest and must always be surpassing himself. Arthur Miller's "Broken Glass" arrives at the Booth Theatre fifty years to the month after Mr. Miller's first play, "The Man Who Had All the Luck," was produced on Broadway. But for the last thirty years Miller has been generally cold-shouldered by the critics, who are put off both by what they perceive as his old-fashioned storytelling and by the high moral ground from which he seems to speak. Tennessee Williams, Miller's contemporary, met a similar critical fate, and actually contemplated leaving America to settle in Australia, because he felt he had been "professionally assassinated Stateside." Williams roamed the world, working at his literary task, but Miller, now seventy-eight, has sat tight at his Roxbury, Connecticut, farm, still pondering America's deliriums, still writing, still insisting on putting himself before a public. Miller, like Williams, deserves the right to be heard, but in the current chilly commercial climate such opportunities are few and far between. When I spoke with him a few weeks ago, Miller was sniffing turbulence in America, and this made him more hopeful than he had been for years about having a discussion with an audience. "This turbulence is directing people's attention toward *real*, rather than purely stylistic, questions," he said. "In other words, what the play is saying to them, what its intellectual and emotional meaning is. They want an answer. It's a good moment, because there's an openness, an openness for some kind of answer."

"Broken Glass" takes its name from the anti-Semitic mayhem of Kristallnacht, in 1938, but it is also a reference to the unspoken tyrannies imposed on each other by Sylvia and Phillip Gellburg, who are the central figures of this short, discursive, but compelling play. In the story of a woman's sudden hysterical paralysis late in her long, devoted marriage to a go-getting Jewish businessman Miller has found a metaphor for the cycle of blame that has infected and seems to have stalemated modern life—a proliferating tribalism that separates communities and individuals from each other with an irrational, often righteous fury that is at once a mask and an admission of fear. "Broken Glass" is a contemplation of this private and public sense of retreat. "It's dealing with ethnic nationalism in a way," Miller says.



In "Broken Glass," Arthur Miller has found a metaphor for the cycle of blame that seems to have stalemated modern life.

PAUL DAVIS

Although Miller sets out his story as a kind of medical thriller—with a local G.P., Dr. Harry Hyman (the charming David Dukes), sensing some hidden meaning in Sylvia's paralysis and in her obsessional anguish over newspaper reports of Jewish humiliation—he is not writing a case study. He is aiming for something much more ambitious: an anatomy of denial.

The fine-boned and beautiful Amy Irving makes Sylvia Gellburg's bewildered sadness vivid. "I can't describe it," she tells her sister Harriet about the numbness that has come over her limbs. "It's like I was just born and I . . . didn't want to come out yet. Like a deep, terrible aching." Irving is a compelling amalgam of regret and rage, whose delicate femininity hides a ferocious will. She is probably too young for the part, but she's such an expert actress that those large almond eyes radiate a sense of longing and loss which makes an audience instantly believe in the suffering and the envy that eat at her soul. Almost her first words to her husband, as they discuss Dr. Hyman's prognosis, are an apology. "I'm so sorry about this," she says.

No sooner has an audience heard Sylvia's apology than it is confronted with her muted fury, as Phillip brings news of their son, Jerome, a West Point graduate who, according to his father, "could be the first Jewish general in the United States." Phillip (played with a prickly and brilliant edginess by Ron Rifkin) sets great store by such small Jewish encroachments into Gentile territory, and is transparently proud of his offspring. Sylvia's gladness is tinged with resentment—a resentment that finally punctures his dutiful solicitude. "I said I'm here," Sylvia says to her husband as the conversation drifts toward the shallows of their marriage. "I'm here for my mother's sake and Jerome's sake and everybody's sake, except mine, but I'm here and here I am." Amy Irving chokes down the bile in these punishing words. Sylvia can't face her disgust at herself any more than she can face down her husband. Her private sense of humiliation is projected onto her fury about the public humiliation of the Jews. Except on this issue, she exudes a weird kind of contentment in her doomed state.

Sylvia's condition puts her beyond any hope of change, and therefore beyond any responsibility. She is suddenly excused from life: a victim who has in every sense lost control of her life and whose illness paradoxically shifts the balance of power in the relationship. Sylvia's paralysis is not just a humiliation but a threat, which explains Gellburg's own agitation as he vainly tries to get her to walk. "What are you trying to do?" he says, shouting over her collapsed body. The illness gives Sylvia an authority that she couldn't otherwise command. There's even a change in her tone of voice. "What I did with my life!" Sylvia tells her husband later. "Out of ignorance. Out of not wanting to shame you in front of other people. A whole life. Gave it away like a couple of pennies—I took better care of my shoes."

Gellburg is devoted to his wife, but idealization is not intimacy. Gellburg has not had intercourse with Sylvia in twenty years. Her paralysis is external; his is internal. At the core of the standoff between the Gellburgs is the issue of sexual impotence, another awful by-product of fear. The Gellburgs never examine the fear, but sidestep the dangerous personal areas of rancor and embarrassment in silence. "I don't know," Sylvia says, of the great no man's area that is her life. "I guess you just gradually give up and it closes over you like a grave." Gellburg lets work close over him. "I kept waiting for myself to change. Or you," he tells her, in desperation. "And then we got to where it didn't seem to matter anymore. So I left it that way. And I couldn't change anything anymore." Gellburg's paternalistic control and his periodic violent outbursts (we learn that he once hit her with an overcooked steak and, on another occasion, that he threw her against a staircase for looking at French postcards) are attributed to his sexual inadequacy. He, in turn, attributes it to Sylvia's early refusal not to have a second child. "You didn't want me to be the man here," he says. She blames her disenchantment on Gellburg's early refusal to let her go back to the accounting job she loved when they first met. And so it goes: a sediment of hate and anguish and injustices which calcifies two souls who began their marriage with nothing more than a sincere desire to be decent to each other. The cycle of blame, with its litany of long-harbored recrimination, spews out of them and pushes them farther into their entrenched positions. They're both right, and they're both wrong. What's true is the psychological dynamic, in which blame becomes a way of not dealing with unacceptable feelings. Dr. Hyman says as much at the climax of the play, when Miller, in his best speech, brings together the public and the private denial to which their lives bear witness. "*Everybody's* persecuted," Hyman says. "The poor by the rich, the rich by the poor, the black by the white, the white by the black, the men by the women, the women by the men, the Catholics by the Protestants, the Protestants by the Catholics—and of course all of them by

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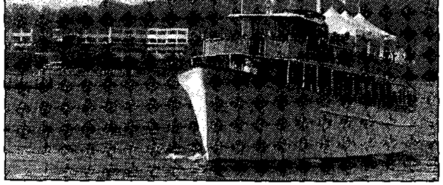

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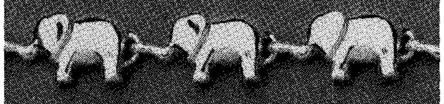

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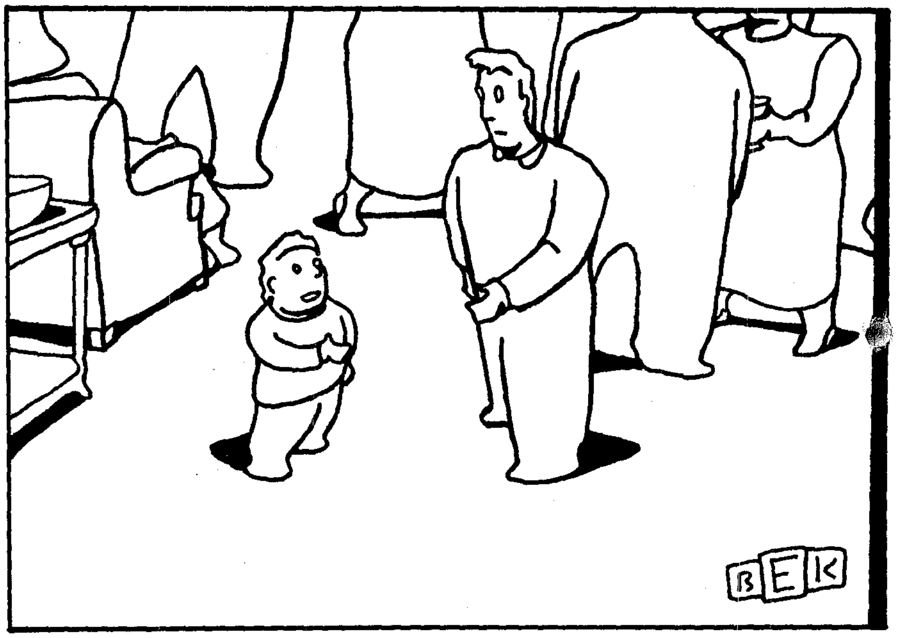

"I'm Generation Z. Nice to meet you."

• •

the Jews. Everybody's persecuted—sometimes I wonder, maybe that's what holds this country together! And what's really amazing is that you can't find anybody who's persecuting anybody else."

Sylvia finally moves out of their bedroom. It's a painful and devastating decision, all the more so for being a quiet one. Gellburg buries his head at her feet. "Do you want to kill me?" he shouts toward her wan, stoic face. And, of course, as the play's last beat illustrates, Sylvia unconsciously does. Gellburg has projected his sense of death—the self-loathing that Dr. Hyman describes as "this 'Jew, Jew, Jew' coming out of your mouth"—onto her. She's paralyzed by his fear, and he by hers. "I want my wife back," Gellburg tells Dr. Hyman after collapsing in a fury at having been snubbed by his pin-striped boss (the superb George N. Martin). It's a plea that Ron Rifkin makes as poignant as it is tragic. Bedridden, he begs for forgiveness from Sylvia, who is in the wheelchair beside him, asking her to stand. "I would do it but I can't!" she says. Gellburg leans across the bed toward her as his heart seizes up and his straining face turns beet red. As he falls dead, Sylvia finds her balance and stands.

"Broken Glass" is haunting and psychologically unsettling. In the Gellburgs' symbiotic relationship, Miller shows people living on death as well as on life, and dramatizes the impossibility of intimacy in a relationship without equality. These are the punishing mysteries of our lives, which is why both in New Haven and in New York, where I saw the play, the audiences listened with rapt attention. "To me, the greatest pleasure is to see the audience sit there and nobody's moving," Miller told me. "They're listening with such complete attention, and there are no theatrical goings on. Now, you have to fight for that. You have to fight for that calm. That represents a reflectiveness I want, and, of course, that kind of reflectiveness is dangerous in a theatre that is all hyped up, that thinks it cannot exist unless somebody is full of jokes or screaming or yelling."

The heart is a foreign country; and "Broken Glass," while it's not a particularly elegant map, still leads an audience through emotional territory that everyone negotiates at his peril. What is distinctive about the play is not its structure, which is schematic; or John Tillinger's direction, which is crisp; or Santo Loquasto's set, which is lacklustre; but it is Miller's hard-won knowledge of the deviousness of the unconscious. "Broken Glass" is a brave, bighearted attempt by one of the pathfinders of postwar drama to look at the tangle of evasions and hostilities by which the soul contrives to hide its emptiness from itself. ♦

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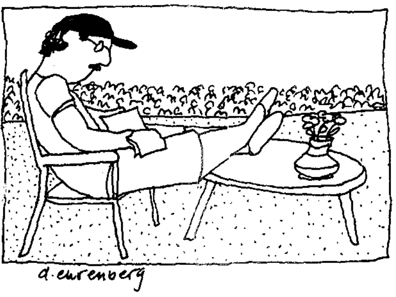

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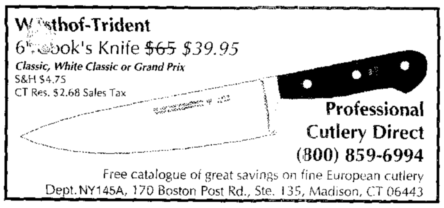

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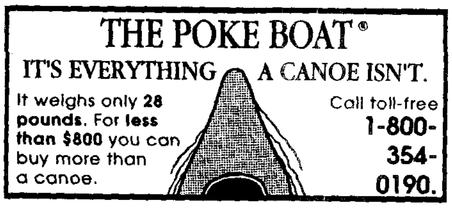

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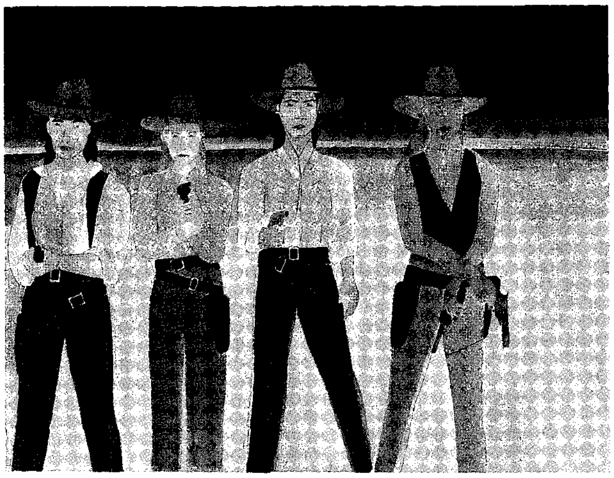
THE CURRENT CINEMA

DOING TIME

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

EARLY in the futuristic adventure story "No Escape," the hero, a convicted murderer named Robbins (Ray Liotta), receives an important piece of advice on how to survive in the high-tech prison he has been assigned to: "Don't think." The walls, his twitchy cellmate claims, are equipped with computerized devices that enable prison officials to read the inmates' minds; bad thoughts—of rebellion, say, or escape—will be dealt with harshly. Robbins, a stubbornly anti-authoritarian type, ignores his fellow-prisoner's counsel, defies the mean warden (Michael Lerner), and is punished by being sent to an even worse place: a remote jungle island, called Absolom, where the most incorrigible criminals, the worst of the worst, are abandoned. Within minutes of his arrival in this every-man-for-himself penal colony, Robbins is captured by the Outsiders, a roving pack of sociopaths (many with striking facial deformities), who first amuse themselves by putting him through a series of sadistic trials and then, after he has squirmed out of their clutches, hunt him down relentlessly. That's what he gets for thinking.

"Don't think" is also good advice for viewers of this sort of savage, hairy-chested action movie. "No Escape" ostensibly celebrates its hero's independent-mindedness, and the script (by Michael Gaylin and Joel Gross) toys with a few ideas about social organization versus the state of nature, but the only way to really enjoy this picture is to suspend all intellectual activity for the two brawny hours it takes to get Robbins off that godforsaken island. There's no use wondering, for example, about the peculiar spelling of the island's name, which clearly refers to the Biblical character Absalom—King David's son, who led a revolt against his father. And if you allow yourself to be distracted by that tiny anomaly you open the door to speculation on the larger oddity of the allusion itself: why would anyone name a penal colony after a famous rebel? (It's like calling a community of nuns the Order of Jezebel.) Pondering such questions just keeps you from giving yourself over completely to the movie's chases and battles and eyeball-to-eyeball macho confrontations, and makes you feel kind of effete.



Crime wave: in "No Escape," the tough guys are convicts, in "Bad Girls" (above) they're women.

GEOFFREY PARKER

It's pointless, too, to bring any kind of cultural baggage along on this trip; you're better off not recognizing all the bits lifted from other movies (most prominently "Robin Hood," "Escape from New York," "The Road Warrior," "The Most Dangerous Game," and "The Seven Samurai"). On its own terms, "No Escape" is an exciting picture: there's plenty of action, all of it imaginatively shot, by Phil Meheux, and crisply directed, by Martin Campbell. A lot of people—teen-age males, especially—will have a great time. I had the melancholy, adult experience of having an almost-good time; it made me miss going to the movies with my father in the early sixties, when air-conditioning and mindless thrills were all I wanted, and I was young enough and dumb enough to get full value from virile heroic pulp.

"No Escape" is a movie about, and for, desperate men, and, since there have

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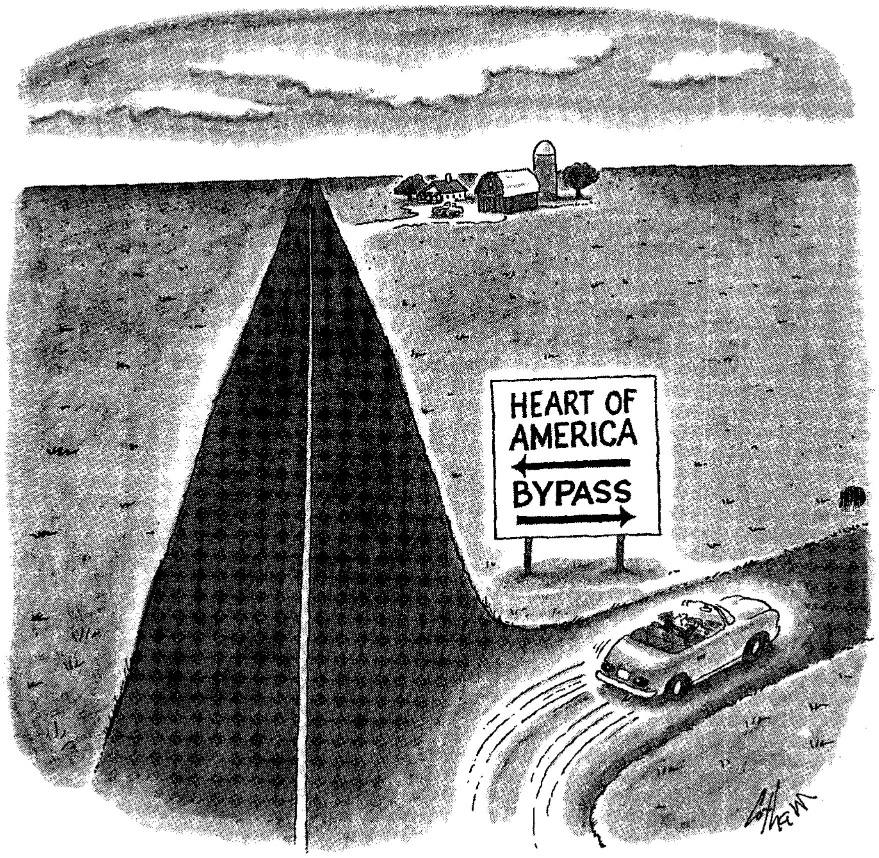
been very few entertaining Hollywood pictures in the past several months, most members of the audience *are* desperate; they'll overlook a lot for the sake of some fun. They're more than willing to dumb down, to take what pleasure they can from a workmanlike genre picture, and ignore the nagging doubts and dissatisfactions that might ruin the illusion that they're responding spontaneously and wholeheartedly, as if they were kids again. The idea of being an innocent, happy moviegoer—the dream of escape from the burden of rational consciousness—is a powerful incentive to suspend judgment on what you're watching. But to get the desired bang out of "No Escape" you would have to pretend that the story's basic moral conflict, between the feral Outsiders and the communal group of reformed cons who call themselves the Insiders, isn't painfully simpleminded. The Insiders have discovered the virtues of agrarianism and the social contract, and are led by a man whom they call the Father (Lance Henriksen, looking like a B-movie Max von Sydow). You would have to persuade yourself, too, that the Outsiders' leader, Walter Marek (Stuart Wilson), is a demonically witty monster in the Alan Rickman mold—despite the feebleness of his lines and the preening hamminess of Wilson's performance. Above all, you would have to believe in Ray Liotta as an action-movie hero, and that's a stretch. Liotta moves confidently, but except when he's playing an out-and-out psycho (as in "Something Wild") he doesn't project an especially forceful personality; the camera seems to look right past him, as if it were a bored party guest searching for someone more interesting in the crowd.

By the end of "No Escape," you're dead tired from trying not to think. I emptied my mind as best I could in order to enjoy the comic-book mayhem, but I couldn't quite manage to erase thirty years' worth of emotional and intellectual development. I wanted to have fun; I had the memory of fun, instead. To enjoy "No Escape" any more than that, you wouldn't just need to check your brains at the theatre door; you'd have to trade them for an extra Y chromosome.

ACTION movies traditionally insult the intelligence of their audience. They're primarily for men, and men aren't supposed to mind. If Jonathan Kaplan's "Bad Girls" is any indication, female viewers should get used to being treated like simpletons, too. Making a Western in which women are the main characters is a perfectly serviceable idea, but the writers



of "Bad Girls," Ken Friedman and Yolande Finch, aren't interested in exploring women's experiences in the West; they just take a handful of conventional genre motifs and plug women into the slots that men have usually filled. This lazy approach makes the whole notion of a female Western seem like a stunt, a novelty act—and a dull-spirited one, at that. The picture has a solemn, dutiful tone throughout (even in the designated comic-relief scenes). The brazen cheesiness of the conception—attractive women doing lots of violent, tough-guy stuff—should at least generate some laughs, but the picture lacks the raffish air of irresponsibility that exploitation movies need. The filmmakers steal from everything, most conspicuously from "The Wild Bunch," and they don't appear to recognize how dopey it is to model a women's Western on a movie whose subject is the grandeur and the insanity of masculinity; the Peckinpah allusions are a joke, but Kaplan, Friedman, and Finch obviously aren't in on it.

Actually, "Bad Girls," with its gang of stunning prostitutes-turned-gunslingers, is probably more satisfying for men in the audience than for women. The heroines constitute a nicely varied gallery of fantasy types, a gal for every taste. Madeleine Stowe, the leader of the gang, is brainy and blunt—a woman who looks men right in the eye and drives them wild. Mary Stuart Masterson is a practical, fresh-faced girl next door. Andie MacDowell plays a frilly, cooing seductress, a character who uses Southern-belle wiles to get her way. And Drew Barrymore is a voluptuous tomboy nymphet, riding and shooting, and straining the material of her britches to the breaking point. (Barrymore, unexpectedly, gives the liveliest performance. Stowe is the most skillful actress in the group—and the one who looks most convincing on a horse—but the character is so humorless that she becomes a little tiresome.) The men in the movie aren't very magnetic: Dermot Mulroney and James Le Gros are pallid good guys; James Russo, the villain, holds our interest a bit longer, but only because we're trying to figure out why he has been made up to look like Merle Haggard. "Bad Girls" is barely a Western at all—it's a marketing notion, a hasty package of something-for-everyone elements, and, like most such concoctions, it's about as stimulating as a glass of sarsaparilla. ♦

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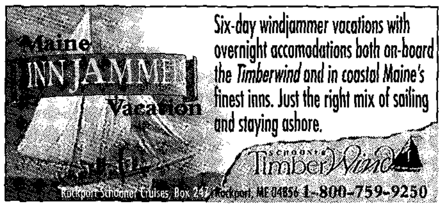

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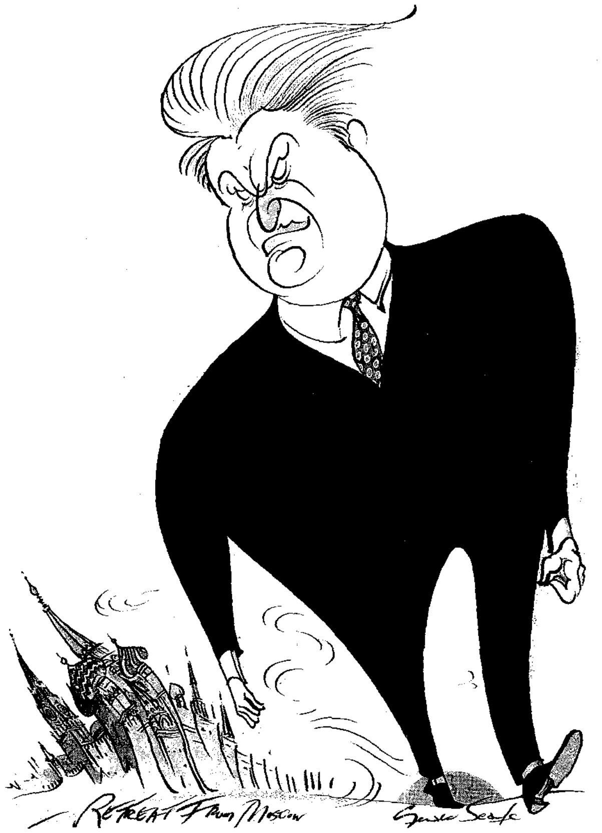
AUTUMN OF THE PATRIARCH

BY DAVID REMNICK

The Struggle for Russia
by Boris Yeltsin; translated from the Russian by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick
(Times Books; $25)

It is hard to imagine now, but there was a time not long ago when a belief in the politics of Boris Yeltsin was a requirement for membership in the society of right-thinking Russians. For some, it was even a prerequisite to carnal engagement, as in this personal ad, which ran three years ago in the newspaper *Vechernaya Moskva:* "Attractive Moscow woman, height 165 centimetres, higher musical education, never married, constantly improving herself in every way, seeking man up to 33 years old with goal of starting family. Those not sharing the political views of Yeltsin need not apply." Such an ad today is unthinkable. Yeltsin's mythic career is in its final chapters; his popular support has shrivelled. His role in the demolition first of Communist rule and then of the Soviet Union itself is already fading into history. The mood of Russia has darkened. Last December, millions of voters were so eager to register their disgust with the wayward course of the country—with crime, poverty, and lack of national identity—that they abandoned all sense and all memory. They voted for a fascist, Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, a gray figure of surprising competence, has passed his President in a recent opinion poll. Communists are gaining support. The political landscape is a bewildering hurricane, and Yeltsin is often spotted riding it out in his fortified dacha, near Moscow, lonely and unloved.

Perhaps one can tell that the twilight of a politician's career is upon him when the central obsession of the press becomes the state of his health. These days, political conversations in Moscow are strikingly familiar, as if Andropov, with his collapsed kidneys, or Chernenko, with his sclerotic lurchings, were still in the Kremlin, awaiting oblivion. There are rumors that Yeltsin is dying of a brain tumor or wasting away with cirrhosis of the liver. The rumors are false. But there are also facts: that he suffers from bouts of depression, that he is plagued with high blood pressure, that he drinks, heavily at times, to take the edge off the pain in his back and legs—pain that stems from a plane accident in Spain four years ago. The rest of the world's leaders worry about Yeltsin; despite their spy networks, they often have a hard time accounting for his whereabouts and his drift. Quite often, Yeltsin



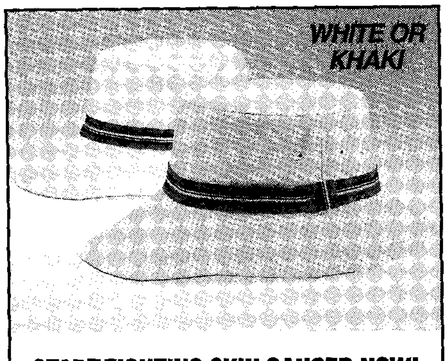
GERALD SCARFE

will stay away from the Kremlin and have his aides bring his papers to him at his dacha. Unlike Gorbachev, whose almost nightly soliloquies on television became a late-Soviet joke, Yeltsin rarely appears at all, in person or on the air. His absences create mystery, even foreboding. Not long ago, on two separate occasions, the White House had Bill Clinton in place for diplomatic conversations with Moscow, but he was put on hold. Yeltsin, his handlers had to admit, was unable to come to the phone. Could he try again? It might have been a communications glitch, which is worrisome, or it might have been that Yeltsin was incapacitated, which is just as likely, and worse.

Yeltsin, who is sixty-three, is well aware of the rumors of his senescence, and does what he can to quash them. During his winter vacation in the Crimea this year, he made sure to get himself photographed in swimming trunks (a milky vision that Russia could surely have done without), and his aides breathlessly described how their man was still in the pink. One leading adviser, Georgi Satarov, told the weekly *Argumenti i Fakti* that Yeltsin was a bundle of energy, playing tennis, swimming in freezing waters, and even picking up his not insubstantial wife, Naina, just for the hell of it. "And, as for lack of health," Satarov said, rather affectingly, "who in our country is in perfect health? Psychological study confirms that to be a politician—well, that is itself a diagnosis." A few weeks ago, Yeltsin went to Spain, not least to visit his back doctors. By way of trying to discount rumors of his demise, he offered journalists a chance to examine his blood and urine: "Let them see what I have inside me!" Such is the need for public reassurance. One can assume that the White House, for its part, is not soothed.

No matter how crude the pretenses, it seems likely that Yeltsin is telling us, more or less, the truth about his health. He is not terribly good at keeping secrets, about himself or anyone else, for very long. Which is a gift if you are a reporter or a citizen of Russia, a problem if you are his publisher. In his new book, "The Struggle for Russia," Yeltsin provides long, dramatic descriptions of the failed coup of August, 1991, and the tragic storming of the Russian parliament building in October, 1993, but he has nothing new to say. *Newsweek* paid around a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the right to run excerpts, and it is hard to see what its editors thought they were getting in the way of news value. Yeltsin's government may not be efficient in any way other than the speed with which it leaks. Officials either blab on at will or ask for a few hundred dollars up front. One way or another, the truth gets out fast. The corruption of Yeltsin's own government became stunningly apparent a few years ago when Valentin Stepankov, the leading investigator of the August coup plot, made the transcripts of the depositions he had acquired into a published book even before there was a trial. And, by way of justifying his charge of hundreds of dollars for an interview with a journalist, Stepankov said he was only receiving his due as a public official for "creative work."

ONE of the stranger side effects of the fall of Communism has been the rise of the Kremlin memoir. Yeltsin's first volume, "Against the Grain," made a splash in 1990 with its cracks about the foibles of his own Kremlin colleagues and the cushy lives of the leadership. He gave first-rate dish. On the whole, though, little can be said in defense of the literary quality of this new genre. The triumph of Bolshevism had Leon Trotsky—a bloody tyrant, to be sure, but Gibbonesque in the sweep of his "History of the Russian Revolution." The story of the fall of Bolshevism, alas, has so far been in the hands of a collection of politicians who seem to draw more inspiration from Mike Deaver than from Gibbon. The books are badly written and shoddily produced; they fairly reek of revenge and self-justification (and a yearning for foreign currency). But some of us not only love them; we find them irresistible. Not long ago, I met some friends from Moscow in London, and a gift they brought moved me beyond words: the prison poems of Anatoly Lukyanov, one of the August plotters. Their weepy badness was worthy of Rod McKuen. We have memoirs now from politicians, advisers, generals, editors, spies, ministers, mayors, and putschists. I have read them all, I think (including the riveting tales of Konstantin Chernenko's speechwriter),



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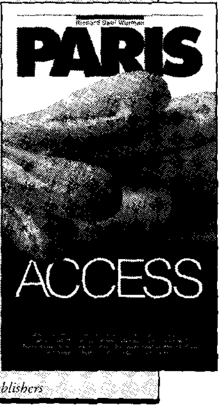

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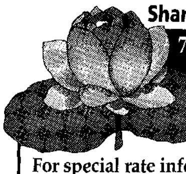
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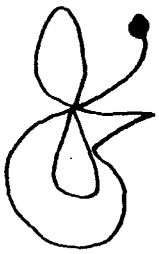
and, while they have the same nutritional value as beer nuts, they are at least something to chew on. After decades of trying to discern the secrets of the Kremlin by studying the Politburo lineup on May Day, we can now read about the General Secretary's marble bathrooms, the K.G.B.'s plots to kill (or seduce) foreign leaders, the Prime Minister's drinking habits, the President's sporting fantasies. The new Yeltsin book features a long passage about how, upon noticing the growing potbelly of one of his ministers, Yeltsin bullied several major figures in the government into taking up tennis and competing in a Presidential doubles tournament. The President, playing with a tennis pro, won.



What a bounty of secrets these books offer! (Some of them may even be true.) No filth is too filthy, no pathos too embarrassing. Zhirinovsky's memoir, "The Final Thrust South," is not so much a Russian "Mein Kampf" as a psychosexual "David Copperfield." He cannot resist telling us of his miserable childhood and sexual loneliness. At one point, he describes in painful detail his desire to take off a girl's underwear: "But what girl will take her knickers off first? I did not know that I had to do it myself, to help her, and I was too shy." If he had had a less awkward youth, Zhirinovsky writes, he might not have gone into politics. That leads one to muse that if some sweet Komsomol girl had met young Zhirinovsky while there was still time she might have done a great service for Russia. Recently, I devoured "Ten Years That Shook the World," in which Valery Boldin, one of Gorbachev's advisers (turned coup plotter), describes Raisa Gorbachev as a Kremlin harpy, forever bewitching her poor, besotted husband into some misdeed or disloyalty to the Leninist cause. Boldin makes her out to be the same interfering, rhinestone-wearing bitch that Nancy Reagan always said she was. (Raisa, of course, published her own book of self-celebration, "I Hope," in which she somehow made the story of her career into a Harlequin romance.) Unwisely, I followed the supreme Boldin with the memoirs of Yevgeny Chazov, the Kremlin doctor whose job it was to monitor the progressive physical rot of Leonid Brezhnev. I will spare you the pulse rates and the clots. Suffice it to say that Chazov's is a book that should not be read before or directly after one's kasha.

Besides the gossip and the occasional revealing detail, we read these books for a sign of optimism. Unlike the giddy years of the Gorbachev era, when one barrier of gloom after another was collapsing, news out of the former Soviet Union is now almost always distressing, threatening. We yearn to hear something of promise from under the rubble. But anyone looking for succor in "The Struggle for Russia" will not find it. Boris Nikolayevich is quick to confirm what we have heard: that his and the country's burdens are such that he is prone to Nixonian depression; that after a concentrated period of activity he is capable of careering off into long periods of funk. He describes waking at two or three in the morning, plagued with worry, and pacing the floor. In fact, he has always been as honest as this (and as self-regarding) about his emotional life. I first met Yeltsin at the May Day parade in 1988—an event he took advantage of to signal his return to public life after months in the shadows following his dismissal from the Politburo. He was quick to tell me how devastated he had been, how he had had to stay in the hospital for weeks because of "nervous exhaustion," so great was the trauma of political exile.

With the help of his ghostwriter, an editor at the popular weekly *Ogonyok*, Yeltsin comes off in his new book as President-as-victim. He is emotionally naked. Feel his pain. "Sometimes I felt like pulling my telephone right out of the wall," Yeltsin writes, remembering October of 1987. "It seemed to be an intruder from the world that had chucked me out so harshly. There was almost a physical sensation that this little white phone on my desk concealed some threat, that it would explode any minute, bringing new troubles.... A feeling of dead silence and emptiness surrounded me."

Yeltsin's return to power from that nadir, his election first as a member of the Soviet parliament and then as the President of Russia, eclipses even the Nixon story in the history of political comebacks. But as he gained more power his emotional trials only increased. In the new book he betrays a bad case of Presidential-bubble syndrome: "Someone is always trying to take you by the arm, to suggest something, to make things comfortable, more comfortable, and still *more* comfortable. A kind of psychological numbness sets in, unnoticed by those around you, and soon you have the sensation that you are swathed in cotton." For some Presidents, a vacation—or a trip out to the hustings, at least—breaks the isolation. For Yeltsin now, it seems, this is no longer possible. He is beyond restoration: "The debilitating bouts of depression, the grave second thoughts, the insomnia and headaches in the middle of the night, the tears and despair, the sadness at the appearance of Moscow and other Russian cities, the flood of criticism from the newspapers and television every day, the harassment campaign at the Congress sessions, the entire burden of the decisions made, the hurt from people close to me who did not support me at the last minute, who didn't hold up, who deceived me—I have had to bear all of this." During the 1992 Presidential race in the United States, Yeltsin was told, George Bush was under so much pressure that he would sit for hours, motionless, staring off into space. It is a feeling that Yeltsin understands. "Sometimes your body cannot handle such stress," he writes. "It's the constant internal concentration and strain. You just need to clench your teeth and take yourself in hand in order not to wilt, quit, retire—whatever."

Another symptom of Yeltsin's decline is the meagre circle of aides still left around him. With equal measures of bitterness and regret, Yeltsin describes how one adviser after another either failed him or proved disloyal or suffered political defeat. There are admiring words for Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. To a great extent, it is Chernomyrdin who now runs the economic affairs of the country while Yeltsin works on questions of national security. An apparatchik from the old Soviet state gas industry, Chernomyrdin has confounded expectations by hewing to a reformist policy and refusing the subsidies and monetary policies that would lead to hyperinflation. But below Chernomyrdin there is a void; three of the men closest to Yeltsin are his tennis coach, his bodyguard, and Viktor Ilyushin, the silent aide-de-camp who serves him his papers in the morning and controls his appointments. Yeltsin can no longer countenance some of his most loyal footmen. Gennady Burbulis, who helped map the strategies that defeated the August coup and ripped apart the Soviet Union in December, 1991, is now unbearable to Yeltsin: "I got tired of seeing the same face in my office, in meetings, at receptions, in my home, at my dacha, on the tennis court, in the sauna."

Aleksandr Yakovlev, who was Gorbachev's intellectual alter ego in the Politburo, once told me that a "great and eerie silence" enveloped Gorbachev in his last year in office: the old team was gone, and those who remained were capable of betrayal. Is there not a similar kind of quiet now in Yeltsin's Kremlin?

IT has come to this: The poor, who once saw in Yeltsin a populist champion, a destroyer of the oppressive regime, despise their old hero. That is natural. Under the current order, in which the old Communist managers and a new class of crude robber barons have exploited the economic chaos of Russia for all it is worth, the poor have become poorer. It is understandably hard for them to applaud the rise of a market economy. The intelligentsia, who once looked to Yeltsin for his honesty, for his ability to evolve, now see him as the source of their own reduced status: in the new, vulgar Russia, artists and poets are princes no more. In fact, Yeltsin's lingering support, if it can be called that, depends mainly on a sense that the alternatives are worse, that no one could do much better under the circumstances, that there are as yet no young reformers fit for the Presidency. No one is on the streets chanting "Yeltsin! Yel-tsin!"

The failures and the chaos of post-Communist Russia are obvious to all, including Yeltsin. That many states with more conservative policies have fared far worse—Ukraine, Belarus, the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus—is of small consolation. The truth is that Yeltsin's aspiration was to play the role of George Washington, to be the leader in the creation of a new state after leading the destruction of the old. His failures, however, are due more to the impossibility of the ambition than to

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mistakes of policy. All at once, Yeltsin was faced with the job of creating a market economy, a political democracy, and social peace; he had to shape the meaning and the identity of Russian statehood in a time of weakness, humiliation, and drift; and he had to do it in a country in which nearly all the men and women of experience and managerial competence had been loyal to the system he wrecked. "I can't say that we had to start from scratch, but almost," he writes. "Meanwhile we had to figure out everything from the start. What was a vice president? How should a Russian constitutional court look? There was nothing but blank space because no such institutions had previously existed in Russia. . . . As a result, there emerged beautiful structures and pretty names with nothing behind them." Yeltsin did not help the cause of institution-building much when he dissolved parliament last year—an act that was probably necessary and justified but that led to the violence of October. Yeltsin simply could not deliver to the people on the promises of his own election in 1991 and the fall of the Communist regime. "They expected paradise on earth," he writes, "but instead they got inflation, unemployment, economic shock, and political crisis."

Predicting the Russian political future is folly, but it may be safe to say that Yeltsin hopes to finish his term in 1996 and then support a younger (or, at least, healthier) candidate who is, more or less, a believer in democratic and market reforms. Chernomyrdin could fill that bill. Some of the younger politicians might, too, but so far most of them suffer from liabilities of arrogance, scandalous conduct, or sheer incompetence. In the meantime, there is no shortage of vivid politicians on the conservative and the extremist planks. The Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov was recently in the United States for a whistle-stop tour, pretending to be a Swedish socialist for the benefit of Larry King and the Council on Foreign Relations. Aleksandr Rutskoi, the military man who began as Yeltsin's Vice-President and became his Cassius, is out of jail and is planning a return to politics. The maniacal Zhirinovsky continues to win boundless publicity with his lunatic public statements even as he plunges in the public-opinion polls. He is such good copy that a group of American television correspondents in Moscow recently made up T-shirts reading "Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a Reporter's Best Friend."

But even if the failures of circumstance and the failures of the reformers following August, 1991, lead to some sort of return of the Old Guard in lamb's clothing, as they have in Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania, Yeltsin, like Gorbachev before him, deserves credit as a political figure of epochal dimensions. Gorbachev's maneuverings, his ability to use one flank against the other to steer an empire into a new world, earned him comparisons with various international statesmen. But if there is an analogy for Yeltsin it is surely Russian, and more mythic than human. He is reminiscent of the great *bogatyrs*, the Bunyanesque creatures of Russian folklore who delivered the country from grave dangers and evil monsters. Like the *bogatyrs*, Yeltsin was a heroic gladiator, and gladiators are better at war than at peace.

After years of working as a Communist Party boss in the Urals, Yeltsin came to the capital in 1985, at Gorbachev's invitation, to be Moscow's Party chief. He quickly established himself as one of Gorbachev's more ardent supporters in the leadership and, what was even more striking, as a populist. As the veritable mayor of Moscow, Yeltsin sacked dozens of bureaucrats, rode the buses and subways, and waged at least verbal war on the privileges of the Party *nomenklatura*. There was some admiring press, and there were also complaints that Yeltsin was too high-handed, too mercurial, but his reputation, compared with Gorbachev's, was rather quiet. Then came the famous Central Committee plenum of October, 1987, a meeting designed to endorse Gorbachev's new, relatively open policy on glasnost. Toward the end of the meeting, Yeltsin took everyone by surprise, announcing that reforms were going too slowly and that his relations with other members of the Politburo—especially the conservative Yegor Ligachev—had become untenable, so he was resigning. Yeltsin even dared to question Gorbachev himself, saying that the leadership still fell into line behind him as with general secretaries of old. First Gorbachev and then twenty-one other speakers denounced Yeltsin in terms

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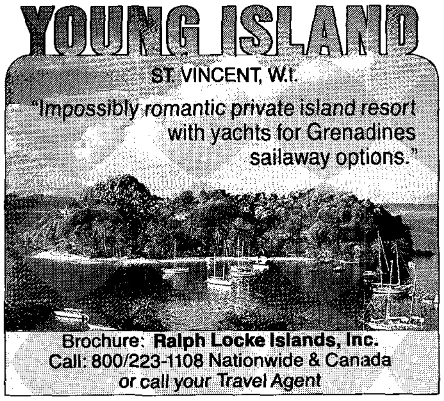

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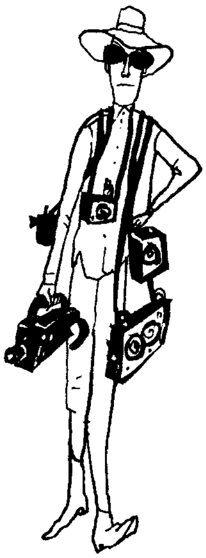
reminiscent of the Stalin era. Yeltsin stood helpless and disgraced, a man in the dock.

While the incident was banned from the Soviet press, word of it leaked out, via the foreign media to begin with, and then by word of mouth in Moscow. Yeltsin's defiance in the face of the Communist Party leadership became an instant legend. Students put on demonstrations. An actress onstage in Moscow stepped out of character and wailed her support for Yeltsin. People circulated mimeographed copies of what they said was Yeltsin's speech to the Central Committee. Gorbachev, for his part, chose to humiliate Yeltsin, forcing him from his sickbed to face further criticism from the Moscow city Party organization. After that, Yeltsin disappeared from view, a pariah to the Party, a figure of folklore to the people.

Gorbachev's attitude toward the emerging *bogatyr* was one of excruciating ambivalence. He did not enjoy being questioned or upstaged; he did not relish defending an upstart in front of a Party apparat that was already deeply suspicious of reform. At the same time, he did not imprison, exile, or otherwise destroy Yeltsin; this may have been for reasons of decency or Yeltsin's popularity, or a little of both. Instead, Gorbachev made Yeltsin deputy chairman of a construction bureaucracy.



Gorbachev clearly knew that he had not heard the last of Yeltsin. He did not have long to wait. With two televised strokes of political wit, Yeltsin staged his comeback. The first came in July, 1988, when he appeared at the Nineteenth Party Conference and appealed, with both contrition and force, for political rehabilitation "in my lifetime." (If he did not win rehabilitation within the Party, he certainly got it in the minds of millions of Soviet citizens.) The second came in the spring of 1989, when he ran for a seat in the new Soviet parliament the Congress of People's Deputies, and won with nearly 89.6 per cent of the vote. Gorbachev, for his part, did not risk running for parliament but was instead given a seat on an automatic slate of Party leaders. That campaign was the climax of Yeltsin's Huey Long period: he railed against the Party apparat's access to chauffeur-driven cars, special hospitals, and food packages. His discussion of democracy was crude. He never mentioned a market economy—at least, not in the several campaign speeches I heard. What won the crowds was the fearlessness of his battle with the Communist Party and the breadth of his promises.

Once Yeltsin was elected to the parliament, he broadened his education and, therefore, his appeal. He built alliances with pro-democracy intellectuals and formed with them the opposition faction, the Inter-Regional Group. He won over intellectuals who had once thought him impulsive and a bully; he even won over Andrei Sakharov. He also began to meet nationalist leaders, especially from the Baltic states, and made them allies. The more he aligned himself with these politicians—the "left," as it was called, incongruously, at the time—the more openly he voiced his opposition to Gorbachev himself. And, as the "peripheral" republics began to assert themselves as political entities struggling to get free of Moscow, Yeltsin began to see the possibilities of Russia itself as an entity distinct from the Soviet Union.

By 1990, it was clear to all (except, perhaps, the Bush White House) that Gorbachev had lost control of politics in the Soviet Union and that the ascendant figure was Yeltsin. No one was more aware of that than Gorbachev. From then on, he fought a losing battle to repel his radical wing—a battle personified by his battle with Yeltsin. It is hard to imagine a set of historical events shaped more profoundly by a personal relationship, an animosity, than this one. More and more, Gorbachev came to see Yeltsin as the ultimate enemy, and, knowing this, his duplicitous security chiefs egged him on, feeding him one transcript after another "proving" that the only way to move was to the right. After the August coup, investigators found stacks of transcripts of Yeltsin's private conversations; in the margins of the documents, which had been provided on a regular basis by the

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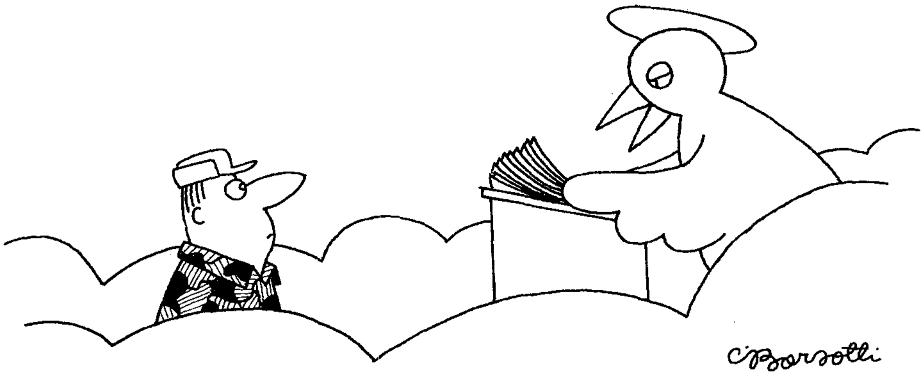


"A hell of a shot, weren't you?"

• •

K.G.B., were Gorbachev's own notes. Sifting through stacks of documents in the Party archives in 1992, I found memorandums from the various security apparatuses in 1990 and 1991 informing Gorbachev that Yeltsin's "so-called democrats" were preparing to climb the Kremlin walls with "hooks and ladders" and seize power.

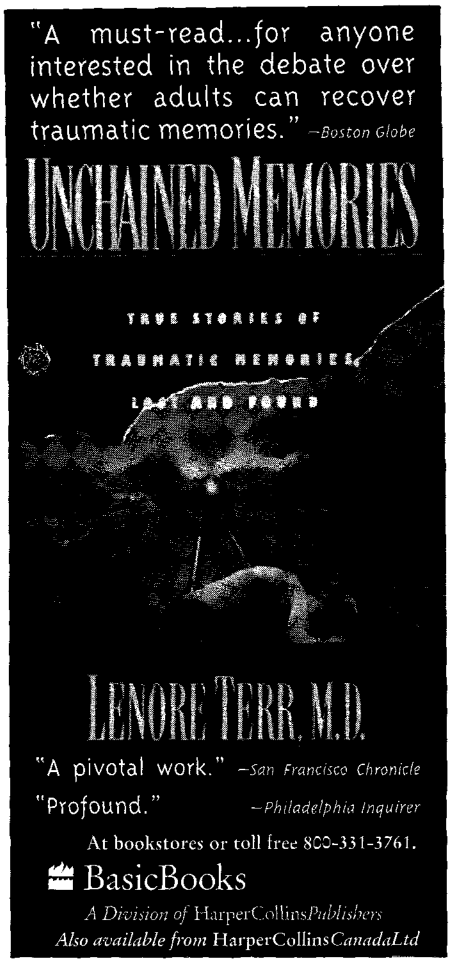
"Against the Grain" told the story, in obviously self-serving terms, of Yeltsin's time as an opposition figure. By rescuing Gorbachev from the August coup, Yeltsin also made him his political hostage. Within four months, the republics went their own ways, leaving behind only the flimsiest of associations—the Commonwealth of Independent States—to replace the Soviet Union. In nearly every way, Russia became the true successor state; there was nothing left for Gorbachev to do but resign, exact a pension, start in on another memoir, and hit the trail of foreign speaking engagements.

"The Struggle for Russia," then, is the story of Yeltsin out on his own. His foil is gone, and in the narrative his sense of being alone, his sense of being lost and overwhelmed, is what distinguishes the tone of this book from that of the last. Yeltsin understands intuitively very early that he is bound to meet failure. He describes a moment just after he has been elected chairman of the Russian parliament, in 1990, and his aide Lev Sukhanov leads him to his plush new working quarters, crying out, "Look, Boris Nikolayevich, what an office we've seized!" Yeltsin goes on, "I have seen many an office in my life but I got a pleasant tingle from the soft modern sheen, all the shininess and comfort. 'Well, what next?' I thought. 'After all, we haven't just seized an office. We've seized an entire Russia.' Even *I* was frightened by that subversive thought."

There would be no end to Yeltsin's frustrations as the first elected President in the history of Russia. He tells the story of how his security chief, Viktor Barannikov, invited him home to dinner one night with the clear purpose of trying to introduce him to a corrupt businessman. Yeltsin fired Barannikov, and it is somehow moving to listen to Yeltsin—a former Communist Party boss, after all—considering with regret what a long time it will be before Russians learn to accept a new economic culture, in which wealth and honor are not mutually exclusive. "A country can't be rich if it has no rich people in it," he writes. "There is no real human independence without private property. But money, big money (which is actually a relative concept) is always, under any circumstances, a seduction, a test of morals, a temptation to sin. There's nothing for it. Years will have to pass before a culture of dealing with money, business ethics, will develop in our country. Our society, our people were completely unprepared to accept this phenomenon."

Yeltsin began his Presidency convinced that the only way to change his country was to shock it. He meant to jolt the economy with monetarist policies in order to create real prices and mass privatization; he meant to remake politics with a new constitution, based on a mixture of the French and the American systems and the Russian political realities; he meant to promote a Russian foreign policy that would work in close coöperation with a range of new Western allies. In every case, there have been significant gains, but also devastating crises: the rise of a gigantic Mafia, the confrontation with the previous parliament, the growing resentment of Moscow's supposed subservience to Washington and the United Nations. Having drawn the obvious conclusions from the fascist and Communist successes in the last parliamentary elections, Yeltsin has now gone into a period of tactical retreat, talking more of order than of liberty, more of Russian might than of peace. Unless Yeltsin's inheritors make a break with the goal of creating a democratic state, they will invariably confront the same crises and will more than likely fail to solve them very soon. The creation of a new Russia, a normal Russia, is a task far more difficult than anything George Washington faced.

In his book, Yeltsin tells of looking through papers about his family history which had been assembled by the "usual organs," as Russians say. Giving us some of the sick bureaucratic flavor of the documents, he recounts how his father was arrested in 1934 for the crime of being a middle-class peasant; that is, he owned some land, five horses, and four cows. Nikolai Yeltsin was arrested when his son was three years old, and returned from the labor camps three years later. "Perhaps my life would have taken a different turn if I had been able to see my father's file earlier," Yeltsin writes. Throughout the book, Yeltsin displays some confusion about who he is, what he has done, the role he has played. At one point, he mentions meetings with Lech Walesa and Václav Havel and puts himself in their league—a dissident. On first reading, this seems vain. Yeltsin possesses neither the proletarian credentials of Walesa nor the moral genius of Havel. But in fact he is right. Even while he held grand offices, Yeltsin was a dissident of a certain kind: a destroyer of that which required destroying. Gorbachev began the journey out of the totalitarian past, but Yeltsin went where Gorbachev would not and could not go. That he is exhausted and sometimes ailing for having completed the job of the *bogatyr*, and depressed for not always having the strength or the craft to go further, only deserves our respect. ♦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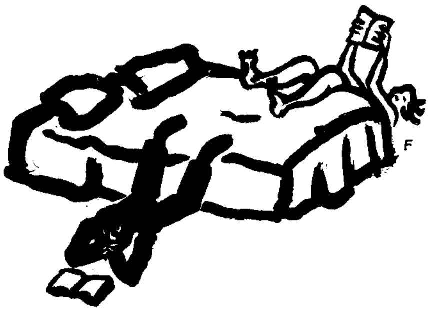

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

PHOTOGRAPHY

Walker Evans: The Hungry Eye

by Gilles Mora and John T. Hill

(Abrams; $60)

In this sumptuous ode to the vinegary photographer who railed against sumptuousness all his life, Mora and Hill have expertly reconstructed the long arc of Evans' career: the early abstractions that formed the bedrock for later compositions; the Depression-era work with the Farm Security Administration; the "American Photographs" show, reproduced as it appeared on the walls of the Museum of Modern Art in 1938; the collaboration with James Agee that became "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men"; the long hitch as *Fortune's* free-wheeling photographer; and the color and Polaroid experiments that he was conducting at the time of his death, in 1975. Evans' lens peeled away the layers of mystification from his subjects. By documenting a landscape of corrugated-tin façades, tenant farms, rusted Nehi signs, and chain gangs, he buried the myth of the Old South, yet such imagery became the basis for a new Southern mythology, which continues to hold sway. Similarly, Evans' refutation of "effect" has itself been appropriated as effect by later practitioners. With nearly five hundred pristine prints, this retrospective convinces us that Evans' eye has altered the way we see, and, while we may be tempted to view his work as gritty nostalgia, it still, in Agee's words, "interrogates the world and makes it feel very uneasy."

Josef Sudek

by Zdeněk Kirschner

(Takarajima; $95)

A HANDSOME, large-format album that affords us the first really comprehensive viewing of the art of the legendary Czech photographer Josef Sudek (1896-1976). The collection embraces not only Sudek's interpretations and celebrations of the architectural glories of Prague but also his panoramic landscapes of the country around Prague and his more personal excursions into the city's back alleys, gardens, and cemeteries. Throughout his career, Sudek, who lost his right arm in the First World War, backpacked an old wooden view camera with glass plates and carried a clumsy tripod in his left hand. There is nothing antiquated about his prints, however: the views of Prague Castle and the rebuilding of St. Vitus Cathedral, the intimate shots of his studio and its clutter, the still-lifes, and the moving studies of trees are fresh and technically impeccable.

Photographs

by Jan Groover

(Bulfinch; $50)

As one turns the pages of this small book, one feels oneself to be in a silent, light-filled room in which rare, strange treasures have been set out with a kind of grave care. Most collections of photographs are exercises in padding: a few true photographs—and there can only be a few—choked by the weeds of a lot of near-photographs. The Groover collection, edited by the redoubtable Constance Sullivan, limits itself to a few canonical examples from each of the photographic genres (still-life, landscape, portraiture, architectural views) in which Groover has worked. She is best known for her color photographs of kitchen implements, shot so close up and so tightly framed that they become a little sinister as well as magisterially abstract. The cover photograph, a composition of implements and shadows of implements, is a particularly fascinating example of Groover's art of fastidious defamiliarization. Similarly uncanny is a series of black-and-white studies of arms and legs, which give one the feeling that there are more extremities than there are people to go with them. A true photograph is the trace of an action completed, while a near-photograph reflects unfinished business. The finish (in all senses of the term) of the photographs in this book is their signature. John Szarkowski's long introduction is erudite and illuminating, but not for sissies. ♦

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That's it. I've had it. I don't care whose nephew you are. I don't care who you're boffing. You drive everybody goddam nuts. This catalogue costs big money, but what do you care? *You* get it for free. That's the problem. You don't respect what you cannot buy. Well, buy *something*, asshole. AND IT'S MADE IN THE U.S.A.! ♦

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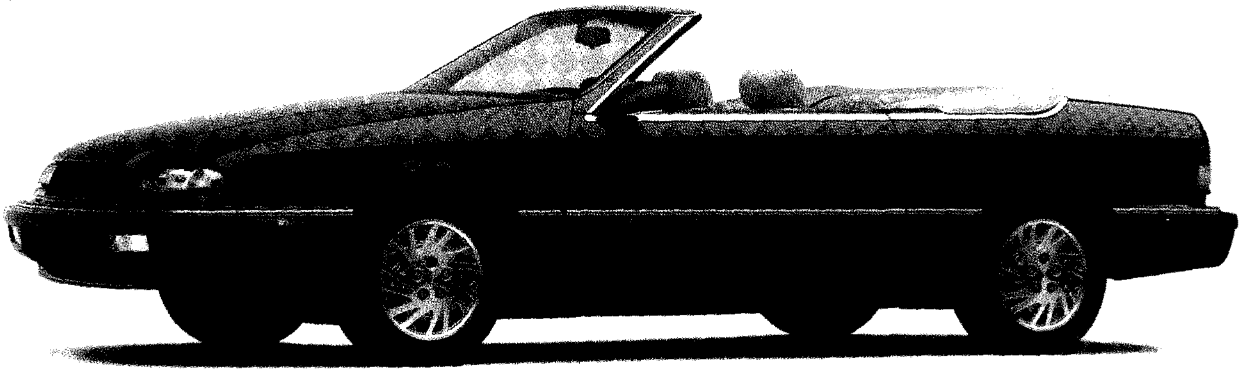

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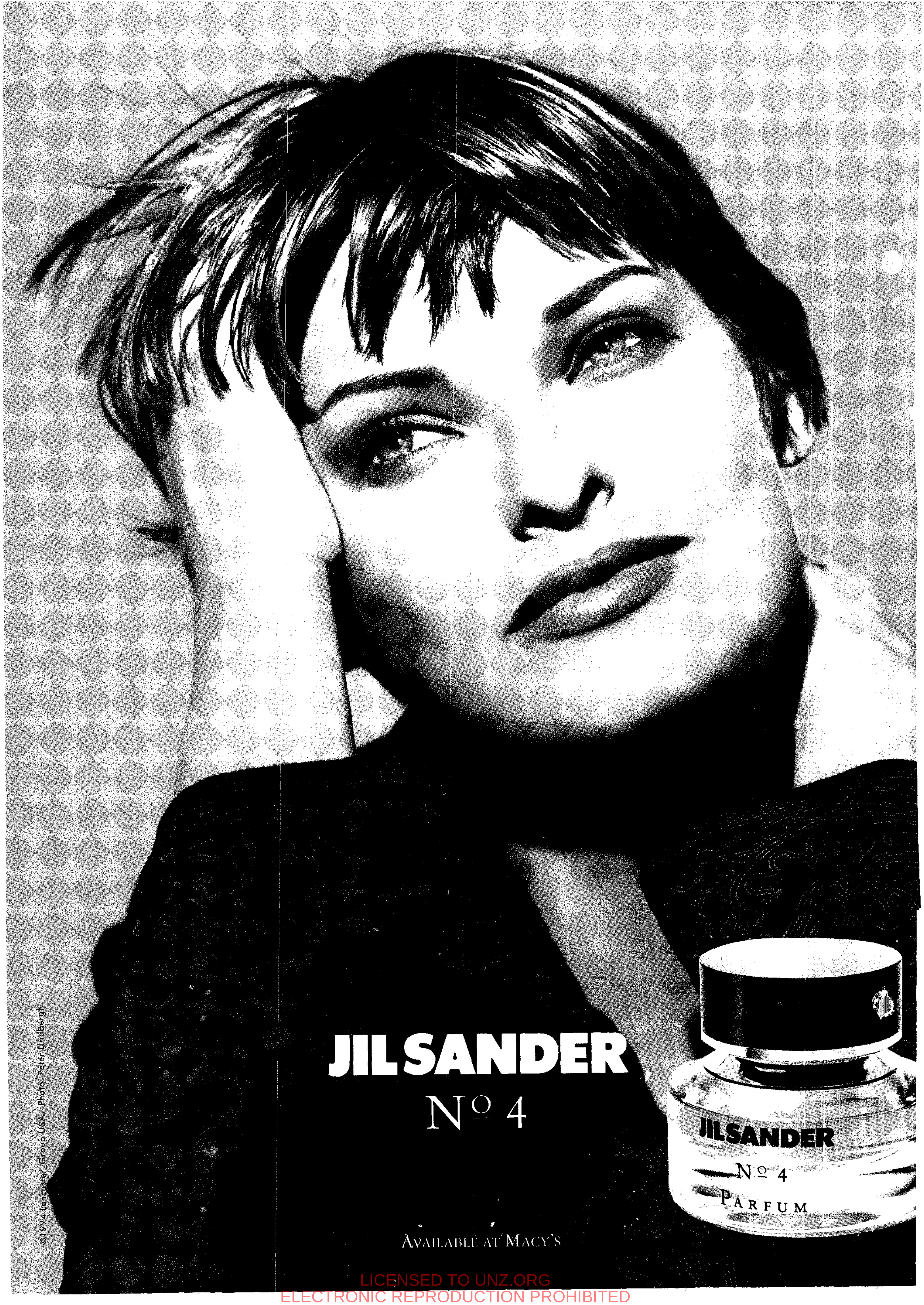

JILSANDER
No 4
AVAILABLE AT MACY'S
JILSANDER
No 4
PARFUM
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